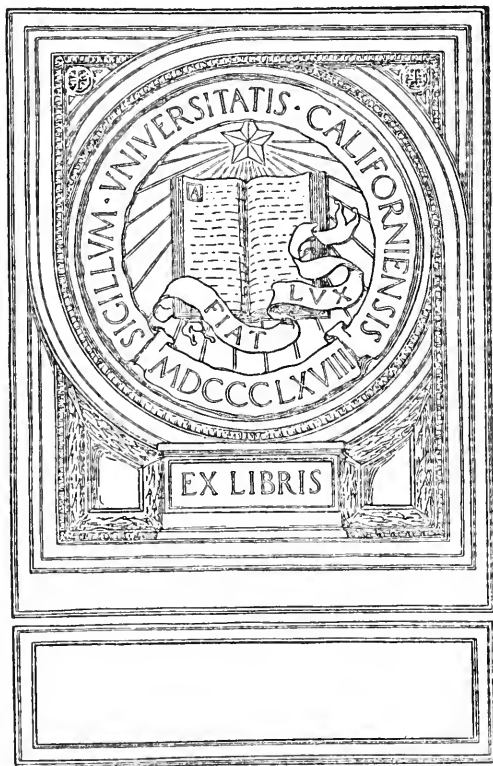


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



THE WAR FOR MONARCHY, 1793-1815

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1793-1815

BY

J. A. FARRER

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Preface.

THE ten or twelve volumes of Alison's History of Europe about the war that raged with France, with but little intermission, from 1793 to 1815, occupy a well-deserved place of honour on most of our library shelves, or perhaps rather a place of repose. Alison spent fifteen years in preparing materials for his work, and fifteen more in composing it. His exhaustive narrative of the military details of the war enables a later writer, in covering the same ground, to deal with them only allusively, and to concentrate attention more on the political and diplomatic phases of the struggle than on the actual campaigns. The military interest of every war wanes with the generation that wages it, whilst its political aspects become of increasing interest to posterity. It was from knowledge of this fact that Napoleon once rightly predicted to his secretary Bourrienne that within two centuries of his time a mere half page of history would suffice for the narrative of all his campaigns.

Posterity, content with a general knowledge of the military results of the wars of its ancestors, turns to other questions about them. It desires to know more fully than contemporaries were able to know how such wars came to begin ; which country was responsible for them, or whether the blame for them was divisible among all the belligerents ; what statesmen or parties were to blame for their not having been sooner ended ; whether the pretexts for them are justified by the light of later and fuller knowledge ; and how far such wars, or their protraction, were necessary or expedient, or their professed aims their real ones. To satisfy curiosity on such points is here the main endeavour.

There are other reasons for dealing afresh with this particular war. Since Alison's days researches in the archives of different countries have thrown quite a new light on the actions of many of those who figured most prominently on the stage of their time. The real truth about any war can hardly be told till such researches have been made, and something like a century must elapse before that stage is reached. Alison lived too near to the smouldering passions of the events he described, before the lava had cooled down from the volcano of international hate. He could hardly think of France but as England's "natural" or prospective enemy.

Happily that time has passed. Two wars, one against Russia in 1854, and the late one against Germany, have so turned the once "natural" enemies into "natural" friends, that it is possible to deal more impartially than before with the past misunderstandings and differences of the two countries; it is no longer necessary to see nothing but black on the one side and nothing but white on the other; even Napoleon may now be regarded as an ordinary and often erring fellow-mortal instead of as Anti-Christ or the Devil Incarnate, as our ancestors pictured him.

Alison moreover saw the war too exclusively through Tory spectacles. As a Tory he naturally glorified the statesmanship of Pitt and his Tory successors as something of almost super-human wisdom. So he came to do less than justice to Fox and to the party that followed the lead of that great Pacifist. The time has come, with all due respect to Pitt's memory as that of a great statesman in a difficult time, to enter more into the point of view of his famous rival, and to re-value the policy he stood for, which might have averted the war altogether, or led to its earlier termination. But hypothetical speculations are of little value.

— The title "The War for Monarchy" simply indicates that, as the fall of the French Monarchy was the proximate

cause of the war in 1793, so its restoration was its ultimate result, and clung to as a hope and motive throughout. But this is not to say that other motives were not mixed up with the war, often almost to the effacement of the primary one. Possibly Socrates was right in attributing all wars in their last analysis to the desire of gain for the easier satisfaction of our bodily desires : " all wars arise for the gain of money, and we are compelled to gain money for the body's sake, being slaves to its service."* If this be true, the time-honoured pretexts for all wars, such as " liberty," " religion," " self-defence," and " civilisation," are merely the verbal bait by which the profiteers from all wars, the men behind all Governments, cajole the peoples of the earth into mutual slaughterings for their own private, pecuniary gain. If Socrates believed in the commercial origin of war, we moderns have only too little reason to differ from him.

* Plato's " Phædo," 69.

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CHAPTER I

1792. The Brewing Storm.

"We have kept our resources entire, our honour unimpaired, our integrity inviolate. . . . We have not lost . . . a single foot of territory; and we have given to the rest of the world many chances of salvation."—Pitt, "Parliamentary History," XXXV., 1125.

"You began in foolishness, and you end in mischief. Tell me one single object of the war that you have obtained. Tell me one evil that you have not brought upon your country."—Fox, *ib.*, XXXV. 1149.

THE Declaration of Pilnitz by the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, on August 27th, 1791, without (according to Lord Grenville) the participation or knowledge of Great Britain, was the first move in that long struggle between Monarchy and Republicanism which was the sequel of the Revolution in France, begun in 1789. On April 20th, 1792, France declared war on Austria, and on July 25th, 1792, the Duke of Brunswick issued that famous manifesto which threatened France with "a signal, rare, and memorable vengeance" from Prussia and Austria, unless the safety and liberty of the French Royal Family was assured. This manifesto was not of the Duke's composition, its more minatory passages being due to the direct authority of the Emperor of Germany, and of the King of Prussia. It was soon followed by the terrible massacres of September, 1792, and it is admitted by Alison that the interference of the two Allies and their attempted invasion of France contributed greatly to the subsequent horrors that followed in that country.¹

But neither the dethronement of the King on August 10th, 1792, nor the September massacres stirred this country from its neutrality. Lord Grenville, our Foreign

¹ II. 1037.

Secretary, wrote on September 20th, 1792: "I bless God we had the wit to keep ourselves out of the glorious enterprise of the combined armies, and that we were not tempted by the hope of sharing the spoils in the division of France, nor in the prospect of crushing all democratical principles all over the world at one blow." Again in November: "All my ambition is that I may at some time hereafter . . . have the inexpressible satisfaction of being able to look back upon it, and to tell myself that I have contributed to keep my own country at least a little longer from sharing in all the evils of every sort that surround us. I am more and more convinced that this can only be done by keeping wholly and entirely aloof."¹

Nevertheless Grenville's sympathies, like the nation's, were strongly on the side of the German Allies. Thus he wrote on September 20th, 1792: "The Duke of Brunswick's progress does not keep pace with the impatience of our wishes"; and on October 11th: "We are all much disappointed with the result of the great expectations that had been formed from the Duke of Brunswick's campaign."²

There seems to be abundant evidence that Pitt equally with Grenville desired to keep neutral.³ At a dinner he gave on September 27th, 1792, Pitt in answer to Burke's alarms about French principles said, "Never fear, Mr. Burke, depend on it we shall go on as we are until the day of judgment": to which Burke replied, "Very likely, Sir, it is the day of *no* judgment I am afraid of."⁴ But this story clearly referred rather to Constitutional changes than to the war.

The strange thing is that William Augustus Miles, who for many years corresponded with Pitt, and who was sent by Pitt to Paris in March, 1790, to try to break up the Family Compact between France and Spain,

¹ Buckingham's "Court, &c., of George III.," II., 222-4.

² *ib.* II., 216. ³ Lecky, VI., 522. ⁴ Pellew's "Sidmouth," I., 72.

asserts, not once, but many times, that early in 1791, or at the close of the summer of 1790, "when the English press was employed at the public expense to decry the French Revolution,"¹ Pitt was given his choice by the King between war with France or resignation. Why should Miles have written as follows to Lord Lansdowne on January 3rd, 1806: "Pitt, on being required to war with France or resign, preferred to retain his place, and thereby sacrificed his own opinion;" and why should he have repeated this story in his remarkable letter to the Prince of Wales of April 12th 1808: "It is no secret to Your Royal Highness that Mr. Pitt, more attached to his place than to the interests of his country, accepted in 1791 the disgraceful alternative on which alone he would be allowed to direct your father's councils!"² Again: "On its being intimated . . . that he must war with France or resign, he preferred the sacrifice of character, of public duty, and of principle, and blindly rushed into a contest, which has brought the fortunes of your house, Sir, and the independence of the nation into hazard."³ Miles challenged contradiction of what he calls "this extraordinary occurrence" in 1791,⁴ and always maintained that Pitt was pressed into war by the King.⁵

It is difficult to reconcile this story with other facts. George III., on February 2nd, 1793, that is, shortly after the French King's execution, wrote: "My natural sentiments are so strong for peace that no event of less moment than the present could have made me decidedly of opinion that duty as well as interest calls on us to join against that most savage as well as unprincipled nation."⁶

And as for Pitt, Miles himself wrote on December 12th, 1792, to Le Brun, the French Foreign Minister, aged thirty, assuring him that since the beginning of the

¹ Miles' "Letter to the Prince of Wales," 123.

² *ib.* 83.

³ *ib.* 27 and 57.

⁴ *ib.* 132.

⁵ "Correspondence," II., 249, 262.

⁶ Jesse's "George III.," III., 201.

Revolution Pitt had made non-intervention in France his duty, and had firmly resisted all proposals for an attack on France.

Yet a story from which Miles had nothing to gain and which admitted so easily of contradiction can hardly be dismissed as a pure invention. Possibly at the time in question the King was leaning towards war counsels but was won over by Pitt to the safer course of neutrality. Otherwise, if the King really pressed for war, how account for its postponement for a couple of years?

Miles' great idea had been to break up the alliance then subsisting between France and Spain by making one between France and England. He wrote to Pitt on November 30th, 1790, that the Family Compact would be easily dissolved if the French could reckon on the friendship of England; that Mirabeau, Lafayette, and others were of this mind, and that Pitt might count on French concurrence "with this his favourite idea." But Miles admitted later that he had mistaken Pitt's views about an Anglo-French alliance; Pitt having at most known it as Miles' policy when he sent him to Paris in March, 1790.¹ Between that date and 1791 "the project of effecting a counter-revolution had become a favourite measure with the British Court," and everyone who declared such a project impracticable became suspected of Jacobinism.²

But in France the hope of an alliance was not extinct. The Duc de Biron, as envoy, with Talleyrand as his adviser, came to London in January, 1792, ostensibly to maintain good relations between the two countries, but really to promote a friendship or alliance with England in case of a Franco-Austrian war. The Marquis de Chauvelin, aged twenty-five, accredited by Louis XVI. as ambassador to England in September, 1791, did not reach London till May, 1792, but it was still with the hope of establishing such an alliance. And at least he tried to

¹ Letter, 180-2.

² *ib.* 182.

keep the peace between the two countries. Thus it was in answer to his letter of April 28th, 1792, with its assurances of England's neutrality in the war, that Louis XVI. wrote on May 1st thanking George III. for not joining in the war. When the King's Proclamation of May 21st, against sedition, conveyed a covert attack on France, Chauvelin wrote to Grenville on May 24th, disclaiming all wish on the part of the French nation, Legislature, or King to spread sedition in England, and begging for such disclaimer to be laid before Parliament. When such alarm was caused in France by an English naval review of a few ships on July 11th, that it was proposed in the National Assembly to add thirty ships of the line to the French Navy, a letter from Chauvelin caused the proposal to be dropped. On June 18th he made his memorable request to Grenville for English mediation to end the war between France and the two German Powers; a request which Grenville's answer of July 8th stiffly and unhappily refused.¹

To this indication of a hostile neutrality was soon afterwards added a more serious one in the recall of our ambassador, Lord Gower, on August 17th, 1792, after the deposition of Louis XVI. on August 10th. This recall could not indeed be taken as a declaration of war, for the second article of the Treaty of Commerce of September 26th, 1786, between England and France only stipulated that, in the event of a rupture, hostilities should not be taken as begun till the recall or the dismissal of the ambassadors of the *two* countries, so that Lord Gower's recall was not a case in point; nor did Le Brun, the French Foreign Minister, in his Letter to Lord Gower, do more than express regret at his recall.² But that the French took it as tending to war is shown by a letter from General Dampierre to Miles of December 17th, 1792, wherein he said that the French Government sent the Abbé Noel to Chauvelin with a letter for his recall, but

¹ Marsh, I. 118.

² Marsh, I., 161.

that Chauvelin begged him not to present it, in order to avoid a rupture there and then.¹

In the interests of peace Miles continued to labour for an alliance with France. As late as January 2nd, 1793, a letter from Paris assured him that the Executive Council approved "very fully and very warmly" of his idea.² Yet on December 24th, 1792, General Dampierre had written to him: "they breathe nothing here but war;" and on December 9th, 1792, a member of the Convention had expressed himself thus: "War to a certain extent is inevitable, not so much for opening the Scheldt, for that is rather a pretext in order to animate the people and preserve their enthusiasm, but to get rid of 300,000 armed vagabonds, who can never be allowed to return without evident risk to the Convention and Executive Council"; adding that, even if the French had no complaint against the English, motives of policy and their internal security constrained them rather to come to a rupture than to consent to a general peace.³

In each country the Ministry was divided between a war party and a peace party. On January 6th, 1793, Miles thought that the Executive Council meant war; Condorcet and Abbé Sieyes were "decidedly for war," (the latter "a priest who had never taken the Gospel for his guide"); on the other hand, the Abbé Noel, Maret (in later life the Duc de Bassano), Reinhard, of the London French Embassy, and the two Mourges strove hard for peace. Le Brun, to whom on December 6th Miles sent "a thousand kind wishes," a month later was for war; actuated, Miles thought, by the refusal of the British Treasury to grant him a yearly pension of £50 solicited for him by Miles in 1788, for some journalistic service to the British Government.⁴ On our side Le Brun was not alone in the belief that Dundas and Lord Hawkesbury (then Jenkinson) were desirous of war.

But a wish for war with England was not confined to

¹ Miles, I., 412.

² *ib.* I., 436.

³ *ib.* I., 385, 6.

⁴ *ib.* II., 3.

the French Republicans. Miles speaks of the "atrocious efforts of the *émigrés*, both clergy and noblesse, to make the French believe that England only waited a favourable opportunity to attack France.¹ He told Le Brun on December 18th, 1792, that the French aristocrats hoped that a war with England would help to re-establish the monarchy, and represented our naval armaments against the Spanish menace as intended for the conquest of the French Windward Islands!² These people, he told Pitt, had been impatient for war with England, avowing that only war would restore themselves to their privileges and the monarch to his power.³ In the responsibility for the war the French royalist faction must therefore bear its share.

Both sides had just grievances against the other. The British case was best put in Herbert Marsh's "History of the Politics of Great Britain and France" (1799); for which Marsh was later rewarded by Pitt, first with a pension, and then with a bishopric. The cordial reception given on November 8th and again on November 28th by the National Convention to addresses from British Societies, with sympathetic allusions to the idea of a National Convention in England, was an added offence to the decree of November 19th, 1792, promising French help to all people desirous of recovering their liberty. And this was followed by the decree on December 15th, of which the eleventh article threatened hostilities against all who, in conquered lands, sought to keep or recall their prince or the privileged castes. The opening of the Scheldt on December 1st, by the sending of some armed vessels against Antwerp, despite existing treaties and regardless of Dutch protests, justified the Dutch Government in asking England for the help to which the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1788 entitled them. French warships at the mouth of the Scheldt would have been a fresh menace to English commerce and the east coast of

¹ *ib.* I., 380.

² *ib.*, I., 394.

³ *ib.* II., 279.

England. The annexation of conquered Savoy justified fears of the annexation of Belgium, then part of the Austrian Netherlands.

The French on their side had also just causes of mistrust. The recall of Lord Gower ; the refusal of our Government to have any dealings with Chauvelin ; the " millions of slights and affronts " received by him at our Court,¹ created a hostile atmosphere, which the cold manner of Grenville and Pitt did nothing to diminish. The embargo of November 15th on the exportation of British wheat abroad, and the Act prohibiting the export of foreign wheat to France, were attributed by the French to a deliberate wish to starve them.² The Alien Act of December, though it followed the lines of a similar French decree of May 18th, 1792,³ put such restrictions on the movements of all foreigners in England that the best defence Pitt could put on such a disregard of clauses 4 and 5 of the Treaty of Commerce of September 26th, 1786, was that no treaty " could supersede the propriety of adopting new measures in a new situation ; " ⁴ a defence fatal to the sanctity of any treaty.

But the main cause of war, and one to which free governments are more exposed than autocracies, was the licentiousness of language indulged in on both sides. Condorcet's pamphlet on " Advice to the Dutch," with its contemptuous allusions to monarchy and to George III's tottering throne, did more to irritate English opinion than even the opening of the Scheldt. And speeches united with pens in this evil work. Barrère's speeches in the Convention were wildly intemperate ; but in offensiveness they met their match in our own Parliament in that December. Special offence was given by Windham's observation that " Before a Frenchman keeps his word his nature must be changed." ⁵ When peace was hanging

¹ Miles, I., 441.

² *ib.*, I., 384.

³ Marsh, I., 279.

⁴ Parl. Hist., XXX., 356.

⁵ Miles, I., 444 ; Parl. Hist., XXX., 40.

by a thread, what help was given to it by Lord Sheffield's denouncing the French on December 15th, 1792, as "the vilest of all nations," and their rulers as "a gang of robbers and cut-throats"; by Jenkinson's calling the French nation "a band of sanguinary ruffians," "a set of monsters"; or by Burke's reviling them as "a gang of homicides and regicides," "a nation of murderers"? This was before the execution of the King, and contributed as little to his acquittal as it did to the continuance of peace.

None of these mutual grievances should have lain beyond the power of diplomacy to settle. The opening of the Scheldt, though fraught with possible menace to British interests, was in itself a good thing for the world's commerce, and especially for that of Belgium, released by the French conquest from Austrian rule; the French occupation of Belgium was only to last during the war with Austria, after which the Belgians could settle about the Scheldt as they pleased.¹ And as the Dutch raised no objections,² all that was needed was the legalisation of the *fait accompli*. Miles, who, in common with Dumouriez, the Abbé Noel, and Maret, on December 13th, 1792, urged the Executive Council of France to countermand the vessels sent to force the Scheldt passage to Antwerp, thought that the French would have yielded about the Scheldt in return for the recognition of the Republic (by the official recognition of Chauvelin) and for the declaration of the principality of Liége and the Austrian Netherlands as an independent Republic.³

Le Brun also was ready to put an interpretation on the decree of November 19th, 1792, which would have removed it from all applicability to this country.⁴ and both this decree and that of December 15th, might have been taken as the mere exuberance of a nation elated by

¹ Le Brun, January 8th, 1793; Parl. Hist., XXX., 265-6.

² *ib.* XXX., 149. ³ Miles I. 417.

⁴ Parl. Hist., XXX., 263. 4.

Dumouriez's victories in November, 1792. Miles tried in vain to get Le Brun to retract the decrees altogether, and to convince him that he attached too much importance to the speeches of men like Burke and Windham.¹

It is impossible to read Le Brun's answer of January 8th, 1793, delivered on January 13th, to Grenville's despatch of December 31st, 1792, without feeling that at that date the Convention had no insuperable wish for war. And a striking proof of this was shown by the fact that, when Dumouriez in the winter of 1792 asked the Executive Council to allow him to seize the Dutch town of Maas-tricht, to be re-delivered after the war, the Council refused its consent "because an attack upon the ally of England would give offence to England, and become a certain ground for war."² But Dumouriez's letter of January 10th, 1793, to Gen. Miranda, commanding in the Netherlands, with instructions to invade Dutch Flanders within twelve days, proves a change of mind since December.³ The projected invasion of Holland, involving war with England, was based, says Miles, on a rooted belief, which Miles failed to eradicate, that England was on the edge of revolt against its Government.

But there were the usual opposing currents of policy in both countries. On January 7th, 1793, Maret assured Miles that the Executive Council still desired peace; "it was ready in order to obtain it to make every sacrifice" compatible with French interests and honour.⁴ And in England so great was the aversion from war that as late as January 28th, 1793, a week after the King's execution, Miles could still write: "I find a general aversion, bordering on horror, to war with France."⁵

Peace in fact seemed within an ace of prevailing, despite the mutual mistrust which was driving both nations to war against the wish of each of them. Chauvelin, in his anxiety for peace, agreed not to stand on his diplomatic

¹ Miles, II., 27.

² Hobhouse, in *Parl. Hist.*, XXXIII., 607.

³ Marsh, I., 355-61.

⁴ Miles, II., 27.

⁵ *ib.* II., 52.

dignity, but to treat privately with Pitt on the causes of offence between the two countries (January 4th, 1793), but Long refused Miles' request to convey this message to the Minister.¹ Then instructions came from Paris to Chauvelin to require of Lord Grenville to fix a day for his reception at St. James' as Minister of the Republic ; and it is possible that so simple a ceremony might have saved Europe from years of bloodshed. Chauvelin was also authorised to offer considerable concessions regarding the Scheldt ; the obnoxious decree ; and the Belgian provinces. Miles at once sought an interview with Pitt, who during the Cabinet meeting on Sunday, January 13th, at first received his papers with great cordiality and civility, but who after about an hour returned in a very different spirit and ordered him to cease from all further correspondence with Chauvelin.²

On the receipt in London of the news of the King's execution on January 21st, 1793, Chauvelin was given eight days within which to leave the country, but he had already, on January 19th, exasperated by Grenville's treatment of him, asked to be recalled to France, in order to avoid actual expulsion.³ He left with needless precipitation on January 25th, the day after his notice to quit coincided with orders from France to return. Had he waited a few hours, he would have received a despatch ordering his withdrawal, but instructing him to deliver a last proposition of peace and to inform Lord Grenville of Maret's coming to England as Chargé d'Affaires. Chauvelin, meeting the bearer of this despatch between London and Dover, disregarded it, from the idea that its object had been virtually annulled by the death of the King.⁴ Maret reached London on January 30th, and immediately consulted with Miles. France would consent to a general peace provided the two Confederate Powers would pay part of the expenses of the war.⁵ Maret assured

¹ *ib.*, I., 445, 447.

² *ib.* II., 44.

³ Ernouf's Maret, 118, 9.

⁴ *ib.* 119.

⁵ Miles, II., 55. January 31st.

Miles that " France would give up Nice, Mayence, Worms, and all its conquests on the Rhine ; also the Scheldt ; she would renounce Liége and the Low Countries, on condition that their independence should be guaranteed, and she would contrive the means for detaching Savoy from her jurisdiction."¹ These were terms that Miles had suggested on December 12th, 1792, but even he had doubts of their sincerity. " All is trick, I am afraid," he wrote, " on both sides, and war is no less the wish of party in England than of party in France."² Pitt may have thought the same. In any case he would not see Maret, who received an Order in Council on February 4th, to depart in three days, and who actually left on February 5th. Thus the last chance of peace vanished. Both the Convention and the Executive Council, despite Miles' frequent warnings to the contrary, firmly believed that the war they declared on February 3rd would be the signal of a general insurrection in England that would have been decisive in their favour. So much had they been deceived by misinformation and false appearances. But when all is said that can be said about the ostensible causes of this war, perhaps Alison's conclusion is right, that " the arguments used by Government were not the only motives for commencing the war ; the danger they apprehended lay nearer home than the conquests of the republicans ; it was not foreign subjugation so much as domestic revolution which was dreaded, if a pacific intercourse were any longer maintained with France."³ That there was great alarm of an attempt at insurrection in England is proved by the credence given by Marsh to the alleged plot fixed for December 1st or 3rd to seize the Tower, plunder the Arsenal, and overturn the Constitution. The King was supposed to be aware of this ; to have seen a model of the revolutionary daggers, and to know where 20,000 pounds of iron lay ready to be forged into pikes.⁴

¹ *ib.*, II., 62, Miles to Pitt, February 6th, 1793.

² *ib* II., 56.

³ II., 415.

⁴ Marsh II., 224.

CHAPTER II

1793. The Conquering Coalition.

To the just causes for anger against France artificial ones were added. The most wicked arts, said Lord Lauderdale, were practised "to irritate and mislead the multitude"; "handbills, wretched songs, infamous pamphlets, false and declamatory paragraphs in newspapers," were circulated broadcast to inflame men's minds against the French.¹ And doubtless the French on their side resorted to similar artifices. War propaganda were not the invention of the twentieth century.

The actual execution of Louis XVI. on January 21st, 1793, greatly intensified the bias to war, and the streets were black with the universal mourning. Placards inscribed with "Hurrah! War, glorious war," were conspicuous over London, and the King was received everywhere with cries of "War with the French."²

Pitt fell in with the popular feeling, but, though only a minority kept their heads, that minority included such men of eminence as Fox, Sheridan, Lord Lansdowne (formerly Lord Shelburne) and the Duke of Grafton.

Fox pleaded in vain for negotiation, taking the ground that detestation of guilt did not impose on us the duty of avenging it; and that, if the war must last till the Jacobin Government were destroyed, it might last for ever.³ In that dilemma which a war always presents to its opponents between their duty to their country and their duty to themselves, Fox took the line that his

¹ February 12th, 1793. Parl. Hist., XXX. 418.

² Ernoul., 119. ³ Parl. Hist., XXX. 1258, 1276.

support of a vigorous prosecution of the war could not preclude him from condemning the measures which had unnecessarily led to it.¹

Panic also helped to popularise the war. Rumour had it that the French intended to take the Tower before proceeding to overturn the Constitution and murder the Royal family. The proprietors of the New River Water Company were obliged to advertise in all the papers the falsity of the story that persons in French pay had tried to poison the New River water with arsenic.²

People quaked at rumours of large numbers of men drilled in a dark room by a serjeant in a brown coat, and ready to issue at a given signal and destroy the Constitution. Publicans were threatened with the loss of their licences if they permitted political conversations, or took in certain papers, and were subjected to an oath to report the words or conduct of any republicans they knew. Meetings for reform at Derby, Cromer, and Norwich were magnified into dangerous assemblies of republicans and levellers. Ten thousand daggers ordered and four thousand supplied by a Birmingham maker for military use, as in the American war, were taken by Burke as daggers for revolutionary purposes.³ Another sign of the panic was that "a spirit of intolerance had renewed its fierceness from the pulpit."⁴ Above all the daily newspaper campaign of merciless abuse of everything French formed a part of the "system of delusion which had been practised in order to bring about a rupture between the two countries." And Sheridan ascribed this to the deliberate action of the Government.⁵ Since newspapers came into use peace has found in them a worse enemy to face than it has ever found in kings.

The stock delusions of every war prevailed over probability. The people were promised a short war. We might expect its speedy and happy termination, said Lord

¹ *ib.* XXX., 424.

² *ib.* XXX. 581, 2.

³ *ib.*, XXX., 552, 556.

⁴ *ib.* XXX., 537.

⁵ *ib.* XXX., 528.

Beauchamp, on February 1st, 1793, owing to the co-operation of nearly all Europe against France.¹ False hopes of its conclusion in a single campaign were "artfully instilled into the minds of the public," said Fox, "by every Ministerial scribbler in every Ministerial newspaper."² Pitt himself counted on its proving short, whilst Burke with sounder judgment foresaw that it would be very long.³

The war spirit was fanned by the customary platitudes. At a time when the French had 700,000 muskets, it was said that when no longer supplied by us with weapons they could not fight for long; at a time when they had a seven years' supply of gunpowder, it was predicted that they would shortly fail of ammunition. Want of clothing, it was hoped, would soon thin their ranks in the winter; want of money would force them to peace, and above all, want of corn would quickly starve them to submission.⁴

Identically the same fallacies that had prolonged the American war were used successfully for the prolongation of the new war. The fact was overlooked, as regards the sinews of war, that the confiscations of the property of 29,000 persons had enriched France to the amount of 192 million pounds.

To Holland, our ally from the start, other allies were soon added by defensive treaties: Russia (March 29th, 1793), Hesse-Cassel (April 10th), Sardinia (April 25th), Spain (May 25th), the Two Sicilies or Naples (June 12th), Prussia (July 19th), Germany (August 30th), Portugal (September 26th). Such a League of Nations against one seemed to promise certain success.

Most of these treaties followed the usual lines, binding the parties against separate peaces, save by mutual consent, and after the recovery of conquests from the enemy. Thus we bound ourselves to Sardinia, promising her an annual subsidy of £200,000 for the supply of

¹ Parl. Hist., XXX., 293.

² *ib.*, XXX., 1264.

³ "Life of Wilberforce," II., 11.

⁴ *ib.* XXX., 1287-90. Lord Stanhope, January 23rd, 1794.

50,000 mercenaries to defend her still remaining territories, and to make no peace till her territory lost or to be lost was restored to her.

And in all these treaties a special point was made of doing all possible damage to French commerce. The Convention on May 9th decreed that neutral vessels with provisions for an enemy's port should be brought in for pre-emption of the cargo, though the French Prize Courts do not seem to have acted on this principle.¹ On our side undertakings were made with Russia, Spain, Naples, Prussia, and Germany, to prevent neutral States from importing to France, not merely military stores, admittedly contraband, but any sort of provisions; on the ground that with a country of rebels the ordinary law of nations regarding neutrals could not apply.

Neutrals received very rough treatment. Thus Russia, when Turkey proclaimed her intention of neutrality, informed the Porte, on the ground that she could not allow a Power so dangerous to Russian frontiers to remain neutral, that her refusal to lay an embargo on all French vessels and to declare war upon France would be taken as a declaration of war upon Russia herself.²

We did much the same. Denmark was obliged to resist memorial after memorial exhorting her to depart from her neutrality.³ Genoa was threatened with war as the price of her neutrality.⁴ The Grand Duke of Tuscany, brother of our ally the Emperor, was ordered on October 8th, 1793, to dismiss the French ambassador within twelve hours, or suffer Leghorn to be bombarded by Lord Hood; ⁵ and the Swiss Cantons were informed, that, though they might keep their neutrality, they must hold no intercourse with France.⁶ Lord Lansdowne,

¹ Hall, "International Law," 674.

² Ann. Reg., 1794, II., 241, January, 1794.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1369.

⁴ *ib.* XXXi., 1371.

⁵ *ib.* XXX., 1400.

⁶ *ib.*, XXX., 1292, XXXI., 1370.

on February 17th, 1794, prophesied that the latest posterity would pass an adverse judgment on his contemporaries for these outrages on the neutral Powers.¹ But what matters posterity?

America, too, as a neutral, had the next year complained so loudly of our stopping her vessels bound to France with foodstuffs, and of our ships of war impressing American seamen for the British Navy, that the House of Representatives threatened to break off all commerce with us after November 1st, and the Senate only rejected the proposal by the casting vote of the President. The possibility of an American war was alluded to in our own Parliament in May, 1794. President Washington, resisting the popular clamour, sent John Jay to England as envoy, and happily his memorial on the subject to Lord Grenville of July 30th, 1794, meeting with a conciliatory reply from him, averted a dangerous issue.²

So successfully for the Allies did the campaign of 1793 begin that it was soon a question of the very existence of France. Her bad defeat at Neerwinden on March 18th, 1793, followed by the defection of Dumouriez and the wholesale desertion of the French troops, led to the loss of her Belgian conquests of the previous year, and after the strong border towns of Condé and Valenciennes had capitulated to the Allies in July, and Mainz to Prussia on July 27th, it seemed as if 130,000 Allied troops might easily advance to Paris itself. What stopped them? "Nothing," says Prof. Sybel, but "such a mass of political and military blunders as has seldom been heaped up" in the history of the world.³

For between Austria and Prussia raged inextinguishable fires of jealousy. Want of money was their main point in common, with a strong lust for an English supply of it. The Allied Conference at Antwerp in April revealed to Prussia that Austria aimed only at conquest; and

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 1399.

² Ann. Reg., 1794, II., 244-30.

³ III., 141.

hardly had the Prince of Coburg proclaimed on his honour that the Imperial forces entered France disinterestedly than he had the Austrian standard, not that of Louis XVII., hoisted on the captured towns of Condé and Valenciennes. In building his hopes of success on a Coalition Pitt had been building on shifting sands. Different war plans, and great duplicity between Russia, Austria and Prussia over their shares in the spoliation of Poland was soon to drive Prussia out of the Alliance.

But the worst mistake was the dispersion of the Allied forces after the surrender of the fortress towns had laid France open to an invasion. Whilst the English Cabinet, "in opposition to the declared and earnest wish of Coburg and all the Allied generals,"¹ insisted on the removal of 35,000 men for an attempt to recover Dunkirk, 48,000 Imperialists turned their energies to the siege of Quesnoi. Though Fox attributed this Dunkirk diversion to Lord Auckland, the real responsibility rested with the King, whose idea was to end the war by helping Austria to reduce the fortresses of French Flanders.² In any case it was greatly mismanaged, and when the Duke of York summoned Dunkirk to surrender, "he had not a single gun to employ, nor a single gun-boat to assist him."³ After this misadventure Fox said on January 21st, 1794, that Pitt would have to "pick from the very lowest class of his flatterers before he could select thirty men who would tell him that he was a great War Minister."⁴

This raising of the siege of Dunkirk, with the loss of our heavy artillery, was the chief misfortune of the campaign; but balanced to some extent by the recapture in April of the island of Tobago, by the taking of the small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and by the conquest of all France's East Indian settlements.

In December, 1793, superior French forces compelled us to evacuate Toulon, memorable for the first British

¹ Alison, II., 480.

² Rose's Pitt, 127, 130.

³ Fox, in Parl. Hist., XXXI., 240.

⁴ *ib.*, XXX., 1271.

encounter with Napoleon Bonaparte. On August 23rd, 1793, Lord Hood had promised the protection of the British fleet in return for an explicit declaration by Toulon and Marseilles in favour of Monarchy in France, and a similar proclamation to the towns and provinces of the south of France also declared the re-establishment of monarchy as the object of the Allies.¹ On the strength of the support thus given to the counter-revolution Lord Hood had taken possession of Toulon in trust for Louis XVII. On the restoration of the Monarchy, the town, harbour, forts and ships were to be restored ; and though George III. disclaimed all wish to prescribe to France her form of government, he intimated that the so-called restoration of Louis XVII. and his heirs would be the easiest way to terminate the war.² This was in keeping with the remarkable address of the King, dated October 29th, 1793, to the "well-disposed part of the people of France," which *demand*ed the formation of a legitimate and stable government, and promised friendship and protection to all who would shake off the yoke of a "sanguinary anarchy," and would join the standard of "hereditary monarchy."³ And, though often disavowed, this remained our real object through a war of two decades. Our evacuation of Toulon, attended by the capture of three French warships and three frigates, and by the destruction of eighteen ships of the line and nine frigates—a disaster described by Pitt as one from which it would take the French many years to recover—was also attended by so fearful a revenge on the part of the republican forces that the evacuation was described by Fox as having been "as disgraceful to the British army as afflicting to humanity."⁴

With Toulon thus lost, with the Prussian and Austrian forces driven back across the Rhine, with Holland and Sardinia showing disgust with a war on which they had

¹ Ann. Reg., 1793, II., 171.

² Parl. Hist., XXX. 1061.

³ *ib.*, XXX., 1057-60.

⁴ *ib.* XXX., 1269.

never wished to embark, the year that had begun with so fair an opening for the Allies ended with much discouragement. Had the overtures for peace made by Le Brun on April 2nd, 1793, to Lord Grenville through John Salter, a public notary, not been spurned for not conforming to diplomatic etiquette,¹ at a time when things looked black for France, the war might have ended soon after it had begun. But the usual militarist vapouring began; without reparation or indemnity for the past and security for the future Pitt would hear nothing of the sheathing of the sword. "Is there anything in this situation to induce us to abandon our views of reparation and security? Are we to give up our claims of satisfaction merely because we have been beyond example successful in repelling an unjust attack? To urge this point would indeed be wasting the time of the House."²

¹ Ann. Reg., 1793, 131, 2.

² Parl. Hist., XXX., 1016. June 17th, 1793.

CHAPTER III

1794. The Dissolving Coalition

THE British peace party thought the beginning of the new year suitable for opening peace negotiations, and Lord Guildford proposed an amendment to this effect to the King's Speech on January 21st, 1794. He complained that the war, begun for the protection of our allies and for self-defence, was being continued for the restoration of the old French Monarchy; and argued that though the French had declared war, they had never really wished for it, otherwise the charge of making war with England would not have been bandied about between Brissot and Robespierre; the English war in fact being among the charges which had brought both Brissot and Le Brun to the guillotine. As to a treaty of peace being insecure, the same interest which would lead the French to conclude a treaty would bind them to keep it. Lord Lansdowne denounced the war as "unnecessary in its commencement and highly impolitic in its continuance."¹ But these voices of reason in the Lords were silenced by a majority of 97 to 12.

Peace was so little desired that, when Lord Stanhope introduced a motion against any further interference with the domestic affairs of France, Lord Mansfield refused to read the preamble, and Grenville's motion was carried for expunging so wicked a proposal from the journals of the Lords.²

But the successes of the war were a temptation to prolong it. After such promising beginnings, said Lord Stair, "we could surely not hesitate to prosecute

¹ Parl. Hist., XXX., 1082.

² March 25th, 1794.

the war with vigour," for "Great Britain had now the power of crushing France and preventing her for years from troubling Europe."¹ How, asked Lord Auckland, could His Majesty be asked to open negotiations for peace; "such a proposition was big with absurdity, folly and dishonour." Not only could no faith attach to a treaty with France, but we should thereby renounce the prospects we had of taking their foreign possessions.² The argument, so popular in the American war, that the war must continue because the enemy could not be trusted to keep a treaty, came to the front again, and just as it had been asked how England could deign to treat with a Hancock, so now it was asked about a treaty with Robespierre. Lord Lansdowne regretted that the same abusive language that had been in vogue against the American Congress was now used against the Convention.³ Burke was foremost in venting his feelings in wild words designed to embitter hostility. He would not hear of treating with the enemy, because Condorcet was "the most humane of all murderers," Brissot "the most virtuous of all pickpockets," and "the only man of any degree of honour among them was the hangman" who had refused to execute the King.⁴ Some, like the Duke of Portland, regarding the war as one for religion, reprobated any peace with a nation that denied the existence of a God.⁵ Yet nine years more of war was a high price to pay for spleen of this sort.

It is curious to note that our ancestors looked on the French resort to universal service very much as our generation looked on the German resort to submarines; as if, given force as the ultimate appeal, there could be any limitation to its logical application. Thus the King's Speech of January 21st, 1794, protested: "Our enemies have obtained the means of temporary exertion from a system which has enabled them to dispose

¹ *ib.*, XXX. 1062-3. ² *ib.* XXX., 1066. ³ *ib.*, XXX., 1083.

⁴ *ib.*, XXX., 438, 9. ⁵ *ib.*, XXX., 1074.

arbitrarily of the lives and property of a numerous people, and which openly violates every restraint of justice, humanity and religion." Lord Auckland protested against "the new invention of raising an armed force by the operation of popular tyranny. The rising in a mass was certainly a terrible expedient, and the more so as it could not be imitated by other nations who retained a respect for law, justice and humanity."¹ And thus a system of war, once condemned in the name of justice, humanity and religion has now come to be as universally defended in the name of the very same abstractions that were formerly pleaded against them. In little more than a century war has made "the operation of popular tyranny" the supreme master of the human race.

One evil result of the alarm caused by the war and the atrocities of the French Revolution showed itself in the spirit of persecution which came over our law courts. "What had been the conduct of the courts of justice?" said Lord Lauderdale. ". . . Had we not heard of the most extraordinary sentences? Were such cruelties ever remembered in the history of our country? . . ." In Scotland "the courts of justice had exceeded everything that imagination could picture."²

On May 30th, 1794, both Fox in the Commons and the Duke of Bedford in the Lords, proposed the same fourteen resolutions for stopping the war, "a desperate crusade," as Fox rightly called it. But the "premature" argument against peace as usual prevailed; as it also did a few weeks later, when Fox and Lord Lauderdale advocated Lord Howe's signal victory on June 1st, off Ushant, as affording a suitable vantage-ground from which to negotiate.

This was our first great naval success in the war. The twenty-six French ships that had sailed from Brest were engaged by twenty-five of our own, at the cost to the French of seven ships and of some 8,000 casualties. The habitual humanity as well as the courage of the British

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 1065.

² *ib.*, XXX., 1085.

seamen was shown in the number of French sailors they saved from drowning. Fox, who had always scouted the idea of invasion, so long as we had the command of the sea, thought that the victory made an invasion absolutely impossible.¹ And indeed it checkmated Carnot's plan of campaign, who had hoped after the conquest of Belgium to have the army of the West by the beginning of summer before the gates of London.² But Carnot by no means gave up the idea. Instructing Gen. Pichegru to occupy Ostend to facilitate this purpose, he told him that the Government had not given up the plan of a landing in England.³

London showed a reasonable joy in this victory over the Committee of Public Safety by illuminating itself for three nights in succession. But those who did not illuminate had their windows broken, and several attempts to set fire to Lord Stanhope's house in Mansfield Street gave eloquent expression to the animosity of the populace against that courageous opponent of the war.⁴ Another cause for rejoicing was the surrender on May 21st of Bastia, the capital of Corsica, to Lord Hood, leading in July to the annexation of the whole island to the British Crown, an annexation which the island had to endure till after two years it shook off the yoke.

Whilst Pitt and Grenville held lofty language about the impossibility of treating with a body like the Convention, the American House of Representatives on April 24th, 1794, was thanking the Committee of Public Safety "for the 'friendly and affectionate manner'" of a recent communication to Congress.⁵ Robespierre himself moderated many of Carnot's plans of invasion,⁶ and through Jaques Roques, *alias* the Count de Montgaillard, threw out a feeler of peace on the basis of France's giving up Savoy, Nice and Belgium in return for Corsica and the

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1563, 908

² Sybel, III., 334.

³ *ib.*, III., 471.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1794, 282.

⁵ *ib.* 1794, II., 246.

⁶ Alison, II., 807.

captured West Indian Islands.¹ Nor were our Austrian and Prussian allies too proud to treat with Robespierre. Austria, or rather Count Thugut, her Minister, hating and fearing Prussia more than the French, was not indisposed to give up Belgium for Bavaria, or for compensations in Italy; and her policy, like Prussia's, indicated a speedy collapse of the anti-French Confederacy. For both these Powers, as well as Russia, were more interested in the partition of Poland than in fighting France, and were disposed to leave "the cause of Europe" to England alone.

The defection of Prussia was a bad example of a breach of faith. By our treaty with her of August 13th, 1788, each country was bound to give mutual aid to the other, and pledged against making a separate peace in the event of war; but in December, 1793, Lord Malmesbury, sent to Berlin to gauge the intentions of Frederick William II., soon found that only a very high bribe would prevail on that King to continue in a war which he declared himself financially unable to continue. It was at last settled by two treaties signed on April 19th, 1794, that, in return for placing 62,400 men in the field by May 24th, the Prussian King should receive £300,000; £100,000 on the return of his army, and £50,000 a month, plus bread and forage. Towards this sum our ally Holland was to contribute £400,000, and all possible conquests were to be at the disposal of the two subsidising Powers.² In vain Lord Lansdowne pleaded for a pause before we agreed to pay a subsidy "unprecedented in all the mad wars in which we were ever engaged."³

But this huge bribe to Prussia proved very disappointing. Lord Malmesbury, recalled on May 6th, could not get the subsidy from the British Government till May 23rd, the day before the Prussian mercenaries

¹ Sybel, III., 422.

² Parl. Hist., XXXI., 433.

³ *ib.*, XXXI., 456.

should have taken the field; Pitt and Grenville he found too much occupied with repressing sedition to attend to him. When he returned to Berlin, the King and his ministers, after nearly half the subsidy had been paid, refused to be bound in June by a treaty which had been ratified with their full consent in May!¹ And on October 25th, 1794, came Count Hardenberg's note, to the effect that our suspension of the stipulated subsidies annulled the treaty of April. In January, 1795, the signing of preliminaries of peace at Basle was the first of many triumphs of French diplomacy. Prussia thereby ceded to France all her conquests on the left bank of the Rhine; agreed to live amicably with the Republic, and to furnish no succour to its enemies. As Lord Grenville wrote to Lord Malmesbury on August 10th, 1794, we had been "fairly duped" by the Prussians.² Having done so much to seduce us into the war, Prussia left us in the lurch, and very judiciously retired from a war that looked interminable.

Nor was our Austrian ally much better. "Our allies," said Lord Lansdowne, "appeared to be only our allies for the purpose of taking our money,"³ and Fox could say at the end of the year that the English and Austrian armies hated one another more than either hated the French.⁴

It was this state of things which had made the campaign of 1794 one of almost unchequered victory to the French armies, not only in the Netherlands, but on the Rhine and the Moselle, in Spain as well as in Italy. The defeat of the Austrians at the battle of Fleurus on June 26th settled the fate of the Netherlands. In quick succession all the Belgian towns fell to the French, whilst French towns, previously taken by the Allies, were retaken in August; Landreçy, Quesnoi, Valenciennes, and Condé. The telegraph, as then recently invented by the Frenchman, Chappe, carried the news of the recapture

¹ Diaries, III., 113.

² Malmesbury's Letters, I., 509.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1445.

⁴ *ib.*, XXXI., 1056.

of Condé on August 30th to Paris in about an hour.¹ And that same year saw another new invention harnessed to the service of war. Not longer ago than September 19th, 1783, three unhappy creatures, a sheep, a cock, and a duck had made the first ascent from the earth in a Montgolfier balloon; and already military reconnoitring by balloons was in frequent use. It contributed not a little to the great defeat of the Allies at Liége on September 18th. It played its part also at the battle of Fleurus, at the siege of Mainz, and at the siege of Coblenz, which, despite the vast sums spent on its fortifications, fell on October 23rd, after a mere show of defence by the Austrians. The five days' battle from September 29th to October 3rd was even more decisive than that of Fleurus in totally ruining the Austrian cause in the Netherlands. And France also counted to her gains this autumn Treves, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Juliers, Venloo, Bonn and Worms. It was by reason of such losses that the Prussian King and the Emperor Francis II., against their own wish to continue their crusade against France, were induced by their respective ministers, Gen. Manstein and Count Thugut, to turn their energies from Western Europe to Poland.²

These great French successes occurred whilst Robespierre, till his death on July 28th, was at the height of his power, and the Convention was guilty of some of its worst excesses. And it must be taken as the measure of the detestation of Austrian rule in the Netherlands that the French were received with the same acclamations as they had been in 1792, after Dumouriez's victory at Jemappes on November 5th, 1792, despite the extortions of the French on that campaign. At a time when in Parliament the war was often defended as a duty to religion, a contemporary English chronicler declares that the French conquests were much facilitated by the respect the visitors everywhere showed to the religion and property of the inhabitants.³ The charge of irreligion

¹ Ann. Reg., 1794, 50. ² Sybel, III., 445. ³ Ann. Reg., 1794, 54.

against the French, which had done so much to bring Spain into the anti-French alliance in 1793, lost its influence after experience of the respect which the French showed in 1794 for the freedom of religion in the places they captured. And as the same sympathy with the French also arose in Holland and Germany, the war seemed not unlikely to come to an end for lack of sufficient hatred to feed it. But British money kept it alive. Such grew to be the longing for peace in Austria and in Germany that in August, 1794, the British Government found it necessary to send Thomas Grenville and Lord Spencer to Vienna to try to bribe the Austrian Court to make a last effort for the recovery of Belgium and for aid for Holland. At their request Prince Coburg was recalled, and Clerfait sent in his place, but Thugut would do nothing for Belgium, and wanted a loan of three millions and more subsidies for the next campaign. When the three millions loan was agreed to, Thugut's request for an additional three million subsidy wrecked the negotiation.¹ There were limits to British prodigality, if there were none to Austrian rapacity. At the same time we were paying an annual subsidy to Sardinia of £200,000, nor is there reason to doubt that the vast sums which the poorer nations of the Continent thus filched out of the pockets of the plundered British tax-payer had much to do with the long duration of this war. In subsidies and loans only this war cost the country £12,599,288 2s. 2d.²

The ever-recurring problem of the limits of reprisals came conspicuously to the front this summer. On May 26th a rumour of a plot instigated by England for the assassination of Robespierre so incensed the Convention that four days later Barrère proposed the famous decree that no quarter should be allowed to English or Hanoverian prisoners. The French generals never carried out this decree, which was repealed in December of the same year, when the humaner reaction became dominant, but the

¹ Sybel, IV., 115, 125.

² Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 146.

Duke of York's proclamation of June 7th, 1794, in reply to the decree showed the better side of the military tradition. He reminded his troops that "mercy to the vanquished was the brightest gem in a soldier's character," and exhorted them not to suffer their resentment to lead them to any precipitate acts of cruelty on their part which might sully the reputation they had acquired in the world.¹

A less pleasant incident showed a different spirit in Parliament. An April 11th, 1794, in the debate on the enlistment of Frenchmen for service on the Continent against their own country, Sheridan asked, in reference to their liability to be shot as rebels if taken prisoners, whether we in revenge were to retaliate in the same way on our French prisoners. "Yes," shouted Burke. "Good heavens!" retorted Sheridan, "consider that the lives of millions may depend upon that single word—that you will introduce a system of human sacrifice all over Europe by such a measure."² Lord Mulgrave on April 14th strongly defended retaliation³; Montagu thought it would lead to an immediate peace; and Burke, in defence of his Yes, and in reference to the fear of inflaming the Jacobins by equal severity on our part, exclaimed: "Inflame a Jacobin! You may as well talk of setting fire to hell. Impossible!"⁴ But this passed for patriotism and wisdom.

The Seven United Provinces were detached from the Alliance almost simultaneously with Prussia. Holland had been, as Lord Lansdowne said on February 17th, 1794, "dragged into the Confederacy against her own better judgment,"⁵ and had become strongly pro-French in her sympathies. This feeling was greatly increased by the indiscipline in the British army under the Duke of York. "Wherever his men came," says Sybel, "they plundered the villages, ground the population to the dust, and spent the plundered property in riot and debauchery."⁶ In vain the Duke, on September 23rd,

¹ Ann. Reg., 1794, II., 168. ² Parl. Hist., XXXI., 377. ³ *ib.*, XXXI., 391.

⁴ *ib.*, XXXI., 423. ⁵ Parl. Hist., XXX., 1398. ⁶ 3 IV., 121.

1794, threatened by proclamation severe punishments against "the most shameful acts of violence and plunder which dishonoured the army under his command."¹ The inhabitants "in despair at the excesses of the English, bitterly cursed the whole war; they even longed for the arrival of the French as liberators, who would avenge them on their hateful allies."² And the Duke himself failed to show that military capacity which in those strange times was expected of a King's son. On September 16th, 1794, Windham, Secretary at War, told Pitt that, though he got to love the Duke more and more, the army would be undone if he remained at its head, and that, though his unpopularity had abated, he had lost the confidence of the army. Pitt, though anxious to spare the King's feelings, agreed that a change was necessary, provided it were made "with every possible attention to the Duke of York, and to avoid any imputation on his retreat."³ So the Duke was back at home early in December.

In October, 1794, so great had become the desire of our Dutch ally for peace that some of the United Provinces separated from the Coalition, and recognised the French Republic. The French intimated through Lacombe her readiness for a peace with Holland, as also for a general pacification, but the British Government would not hear of it; "the idea of peace was reprobated in the strongest terms"; the Dutch were told that "peace was absolutely impossible," and urged to a vigorous continuance of the war.⁴ A letter from The Hague, dated October 15th, to Miles, describes our Minister at The Hague, Lord St. Helens, as labouring night and day to prevent Holland from making her peace with France.⁵ A Dutch writer on November 18th, said: "From the worse than indiscreet conduct of your troops, and from the rapid advances of the French, do not be surprised if

¹ Ann. Reg., 1795, II., 171.

² Sybel, IV., 122.

³ Windham Papers, I., 239-42, 253.

⁴ Count de — to Miles, II., 217. ⁵ Miles to Prince of Wales, 193.

we should unite with France, and take a part against you ; we never cordially loved you, but your Cabinet has contrived to make us most cordially hate you.”¹

A frost that turned all the rivers and canals into bridges much facilitated Pichegru's advance against Holland. Grave, the only town that held out for so long as a month, capitulated on December 30th, 1794 ; the patriotic proclamations of the Stadtholder, whose attachment to the Allies had become hateful to his people, fell on deaf ears ; and on January 19th, 1795, he barely escaped with his life across the sea to Harwich. The next day Pichegru's army entered Amsterdam with every manifestation of delight from the inhabitants, and a victory, signalised by the good discipline of the troops, heralded the proclamation of the Freedom of the Provinces. All the other towns as gladly welcomed the French as their deliverers ; liberty of conscience and of religious worship were everywhere introduced,² and France added to her resources the gain of Dutch wealth and of the Dutch fleet.

The retreat of the British troops, which had so gallantly striven to avert the invasion, was among the most miserable recorded in history. It lasted for two months through that bitter winter, with such neglect on the part of the military authorities at home that many of the wounded were frozen to death in open waggons. But more unkind than the winter's winds was man's ingratitude. Concealed foes met the troops in every town and village, nor could food be bought for money. “ The hatred of the natives to the English was never concealed, whenever they dared to manifest it ” ; “ the country was hostile to them all the way ” to Bremen, where the welcome shown to the survivors made some atonement for their past miseries. For the generality of the Dutch, regarding the English as the cause of the war, “ held them in abhorrence, and sought every occasion to add to their present distresses.”³ It was a happy day for the

¹ *ib.*, 195.

² *Ann. Reg.*, 1795, 52.

³ *ib.*, 1795, 49.

survivors, when on April 11th, 1795, they embarked from Bremen, and a still happier one when they reached their different destinations in the home land. And from that time till 1799, when an attempt to invade Holland ended disastrously, England took no part in the war on the Continent, whilst an army of 200,000 men waited at home for the call that might come to resist an invasion.

On December 30th, 1794, Lord Lansdowne asked what had become of our armies, the finest ever raised: "they were to be found nowhere; they were gone to God, and no longer to be found among men. . . . And how were our armies recruited? By old men and boys. We had no other recruits; our officers were children, our grenadiers invalids." And for such recruits a bounty of twenty-five guineas was necessary.

Fox, who rejoiced never to have given an opinion which had cost his country a drop of British blood, said on March 24th, 1795, that Pitt had brought the country "to the verge of ruin by the obstinacy and madness of his conduct."²

A campaign which had begun with Ministerial talk of a march to Paris³ had thus ended with the honours of war and of diplomacy in favour of France. In the hall of the Convention a list of the French conquests during the year was hung up, and copies of it distributed to the armies. It included the Ten Provinces of the Austrian Netherlands and the Seven United Provinces of Holland; the bishoprics of Liège, Worms and Spire; the Electorates of Treves, Mainz and Cologne; the Palatinate and the Duchies of Deux Ponts, Juliers and Cleves. In the South there were the principalities of Nice, Monaco and Savoy; in Spain, the provinces of Biscay and Catalonia; an increase of thirteen millions of population. Twenty-seven battles of importance had been won and 116 strong cities taken. And Prussia, and Holland, and even Austria, had been virtually detached from the enemies of France.

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 974. ² *ib.*, XXXI., 1411. ³ *ib.*, XXXI., 402, 1269.

CHAPTER IV

1795. The Quiberon Year.

ON December 17th, 1794, Barthélemy, the French Minister at Basle, wrote a letter to Miles, by express order of the Convention, to the effect that on December 6th the Convention had passed a resolution to welcome any proposals for peace that were consistent with the interests, the safety and the dignity of France.¹ On January 2nd, 1795, Miles informed Pitt of this fact, and regretted always that Pitt paid no attention to this invitation to treat.² "I am certain," he wrote to Pitt two years later (May 18th, 1797), "from the disastrous issue of the contest you must feel regret at having declined the overture of peace which Barthélemy transmitted to me *by the direction of the Convention*, for the purpose of being recommended to you."³

And indeed there was less reason in 1795 than in 1794 for the failure to end the war. For after the fall of Robespierre on July 28th, 1794, a reaction towards moderation and humanity had followed the reign of terror; as was most conspicuously shown in the treaties of amnesty concluded between the Convention and the Vendean and Chouan insurrectionists in March and April, 1795. The suppression of the insurrection had been marked by atrocities inconceivably shameful, but such reconciliation as was possible was effected by the bringing to the guillotine of Carrier and two others for the unspeakable cruelties of the Tribunal of Nantes; by the liberal compensation given for the restoration of the burnt and devastated districts; and by the permission for the

¹ Miles, II., 215.

² *ib.*, II., 225, 343.

³ *ib.*, I., 96.

return of the priests and for the resumption of the Catholic rites of religion.¹

This spirit of greater moderation was reflected also in French diplomacy, and met its natural response in a general disposition to peace. The Diet of Ratisbon on December 22nd, 1794, had expressed a decided wish for that lost blessing, with which the Emperor at least affected to sympathise ; on February 5th, 1795, Fox spoke of the Empire's wish for peace as unanimous.² Prussia having broken away from the Coalition had, much to the imperial annoyance, as expressed in a proclamation of May 6th, 1795, concluded her long negotiations with France by her treaty of peace and alliance on April 5th, 1795, at Basle. Tuscany also retired from the alliance in February, and re-confirmed her policy of neutrality on March 1st, 1795. Sweden in April recognised the French Republic, as did also the Canton of Basle and the Swiss Protestant Cantons. Spain, utterly defeated, made her peace with France on July 22nd, 1795. She had to her honour contended for the release of the royal children in the Temple as one of the conditions of peace ; but the death of the long-tormented child, Louis XVII., on June 8th, 1795, had removed this difficulty to an agreement. She received back from France all her conquered territories, in return for the recognition of the French and Batavian Republics, the cession to France of the Spanish portion of St. Domingo, and her good offices for a peace between France and the Courts of Naples, Sardinia, Parma and Portugal. Even the Landgrave of Hesse deserted the Coalition on August 29th, 1795, promising to supply no more military aid to the enemies of France. The Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) were formally annexed to the French Republic on October 1st, 1795, after a long discussion, and against the warnings of the Moderate party in the Convention.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1795, II., 177. Sybel, IV., 303.

² Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1305.

Clauses in treaties against separate peace were as vain as usual in keeping the allies together. But the loss of our Dutch ally was a grievous blow. The French conquest of the Provinces ended on May 15th, 1795, for the price of four million pounds paid to France for the expenses of the war, in an offensive and defensive alliance between the Batavian and French Republics, to last for the period only of the war against other enemies, but against Great Britain "for ever."¹ Twelve Dutch ships of the line and eighteen frigates became a fresh asset to the French navy.

But it had been generally hoped in France that the Peace with Prussia would lead to a general pacification,² and such a hope was expressed by speeches in the Convention on February 13th, 1795.³ Nor were the British people behind the rest of Europe in the same desire. The city of London voted a petition to Parliament to stop the war, by 4,000 to 100; Southwark and several large cities passed similar resolutions.⁴ Fox and the Peace party were indefatigable in the same cause; and many of the original believers in the war, like Wilberforce and Sir Richard Hill, had come to repent of their share in the war-delirium of 1793. The anti-war minority in Parliament was visibly increasing; and Bishop Watson of Llandaff, breaking away from his cloth, distinguished himself by advocating peace in the neglected interests of Christian humanity.⁵

But Pitt would not hear of negotiation. The usual scorn was thrown on the idea. Lord Mansfield, whom his contemporaries spoke of as wisdom personified, would not hear of "crouching at the feet of France"; Lord Camden ranted against "bending the knee to the French Republic"; William Windham, Secretary at War,

¹ Ann. Reg., 1795, II., 182, Articles 3 and 4.

² Ann. Reg., 1795, 61.

³ Miles, II., 239.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1795, II., 105, 6.

⁵ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1264, January 27th, 1795.

spoke with contempt of "stealing out of the war." It was in vain that Fox fought against this favourite argument of the war party: "To propose negotiations is not to sue for peace. It is at every moment dignified and proper to restore the blessing of peace, and it is certainly one thing to propose a negotiation in which terms are to be fairly and manfully discussed, and another to sue to your enemy for peace" (October 6th, 1796).

Against another favourite argument for war, that no treaty with the enemy could be trusted, Fox pronounced a principle which is true for all time: "If a rational treaty is made, and it is the interest of the parties to keep it, that is the only true and wise dependence which you can have for the continuance of peace" (October 29th, 1795).

But at that time Pitt's great argument was the familiar one, that negotiation would be "premature,"¹ it being the common assumption in the gamble of every war that a later peace is demonstrably better than any peace made at the moment. So he continued to make monotonous speeches on the evils of an insecure peace, on the fall of the French assignats, and on the imminent and inevitable ruin of France. To cover the wastage of the alliance he made fresh treaties with Russia and the Empire: Russia to supply 10,000 infantry and 2,000 horse in return for a large British squadron (February 18th, 1795), and the Empire and Great Britain to guarantee their respective possessions undiminished at the conclusion of peace. (May 20th, 1795).

So the war continued its needless course. On June 7th, 1795, the French added the taking of Luxemburg to their victories. But the chief event of this summer was their defeat of the plot for the restoration of the Bourbons, which ended so disastrously in the Bay of Quiberon. Considering the terrible sufferings of the Chouans and the Vendéans in the suppression of their

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXII. 28, 38.

first rising in 1793, and the pacification of the country by the Convention in March, 1795, nothing but a certainty of success could have justified our Government in encouraging these courageous royalists to a fresh trial of arms with the Republic.

Yet Lord Grenville had always relied on a royalist counter-revolution for ending the war. Without the knowledge of most of his colleagues he had sent William Wickham to Switzerland on a secret mission, and since June, 1795, Wickham acted at Berne, ostensibly as our Minister, but really as Spy-in-Chief for Grenville. The scheme was to bring back Louis XVIII. to France, partly by insurrections in Lyons, Provence and La Vendée, and partly by an invasion of France under the Prince de Condé. The scheme might have succeeded, for there was a strong tendency in France at the time towards a *limited* monarchy. But neither money nor persuasion could prevail on the *émigrés* to think of anything but an unlimited monarchy; the full *ancien régime*, with all its old tyrannies and abuses. It was to be Royalty on "the old principles," and the Prince de Condé insisted on the support of the Royal cause "in its ancient purity."¹ Wickham complained that many Frenchmen dreaded the return of the emigrants more even than the revival of the Jacobins, and feared their insolence more than their vengeance. Their imprudent language and conduct put the severest strain on Wickham's patience.² Neither he nor General Pichegru could induce Louis XVIII. to abate one jot of the full rigour of his claims. It was always the same. On July 18th, 1796, Wickham told Grenville that Louis declared that "he would rather relinquish his crown than accept of any conditions that were not grafted on the laws of the ancient Government."³ Louis would offer no sacrifices through his agents, nor ever ceased to talk of "the ancient régime in all its purity."⁴

¹ Wickham's Corresp., I., 106.

³ *ib.*, I., 424.

² *ib.*, I., 204.

⁴ *ib.*, I., 434.

It was to this impracticable King and party that the country became committed. Pitt had disclaimed as a madness the idea of making the restoration a condition of peace.¹ and denied that such restoration of monarchy "on the old principles" had ever been stated by His Majesty, by Government, or by Parliament as a *sine qua non* of peace,² but both he and Grenville and the King must have known through Wickham that this was the only aim which interested the *émigrés*, whose cause they so disastrously espoused; though George III. himself did not share in the infatuation of his Ministers for the *émigrés*, against whom, thinking they would prove false, he steadily directed his influence."³ Wickham's letters show how numerous were the threads, how lavish the expenditure, by which, with an ability only equalled by its futility, our ministers furthered the interests of the Bourbons.

But for eight months Count Puisaye tried in vain to obtain active assistance for the Royalists and *émigrés* from the British Government, before he succeeded; and the result was what Erskine well called "the merciless and impolitic expedition to Quiberon," on the coast of Brittany. Miles says that it was Windham who planned the expedition, and that Pitt yielded to him against his better judgment.⁴ Windham was the evil genius of this war; "uncommonly and classically clever," said Lord Malmesbury, but with so little knowledge of mankind that "he was the dupe of every emigrant who called on him"; persistent in his idea of a *Bellum internecinum* (war to the knife) and spoilt by the influence of Burke.⁵ The result was the revival of the recently quenched civil war in Western France and untold misery to the luckless *émigrés*, who were collected from all quarters for the intended and accomplished landing. They were not

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 1397, March 24th, 1795.

² *ib.*, XXXI., 1212.

³ Rose's Pitt, 261.

⁴ I., 90.

⁵ Diaries, III., 590.

stinted in war equipment, being supplied by Pitt with 30,000 muskets and 22,000 uniforms, and 19 cannons. But they fell victims by the thousand to the soldiers of Gen. Hoche, or to the executioners of Tallien.¹ Well might Fox say of this dreadful fiasco that it would stain the British character in the estimation of posterity more than all the other operations of the war.² Yet it did not deter the Government from a second expedition the same year; which only its utter failure saved from being attended by the same useless loss of life. Windham never ceased to delude himself and to delude others with his idle hopes of conquering France by means of the Royalists and emigrants. Not without justice did Miles write to the Duke of Leeds on December 30th, 1795, that the blunders of the Government could not have been exceeded "by any twelve hackney coachmen taken from the first stand."³

Riots in many English towns showed how hateful the war was becoming to the virtually unrepresented people, who were taxed mercilessly for Pitt's war policy. Crimping houses, which decoyed men, often when drunk, to enlist in the army and navy, were the objects of fierce attacks. And when Parliament met earlier than usual on October 29th, 1795, the King's coach was mobbed both in going to and in returning from Westminster; there were ominous cries of "No King," and shoutings for peace and for Pitt's dismissal. But this only led to the Pitt and Grenville Acts (33 *Geo. III.* 7 and 8, December 18th, 1795), which put still greater restrictions than before on the rights of meeting, speaking and writing, and brought sentences of transportation or of death unpleasantly near to all opponents of the Government and the war. The war made the Government a military despotism, as war invariably does. Fox declared that the powers over meetings conferred by these Acts "repealed the Bill of

¹ Alison, II., 946-957. Sybel, IV., 387.

² Parl. Hist., XXXII., 170.

³ II., 274.

Rights, and cut up the whole of the Constitution by the roots, by changing our limited monarchy into an absolute despotism.”¹ Even Grenville admitted that the new law intrenched “in some degree” on the Bill of Rights.² But some departure from the paths of freedom by those responsible for the safety of the country doubtless derived some justification from the terrible experiences of France.

The lesson of the Royal coach was not lost upon Pitt. It was evident that the popularity of the war was fast ebbing. The war had been marked, as Grey said (later the Lord Grey of the Reform Bill of 1832), “by one continued series of misery and misfortune,” and except at sea, had been nothing “but an unremitting series of defeat and disgrace.”³

The majority which Pitt commanded in Parliament really proved nothing of the feeling of the country, for as Sturt wrote to Miles on November 29th, 1801, “to talk of the independence of Parliament is too absurd, when we recollect how we are elected. We purchase our seats as you do your beef and mutton.”⁴

The customary tests of prosperity attested the customary growth of wealth, but in the poorer classes not one labourer in ten could support his family by his labour.⁵ No rise of wages had kept pace with the rise of prices. A bushel of wheat per week was accepted as the lowest price that could support a labourer’s family, but in Wiltshire, with wheat at fourteen shillings a bushel, the price of labour was only seven shillings a week.⁶ A barley loaf cost 12½d., and a shilling was a labourer’s daily wage.⁷ And whilst Parliament stuck to a maximum figure beyond which wages could not rise, Pitt would on no account suffer Parliament to fix a minimum beyond which they could not fall.⁸ Pitt’s everlasting harping on the

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 383.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 716.

⁵ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 165.

⁷ *ib.* XXXII., 712.

² *ib.*, XXXII. 529.

⁴ Corresp., I., 101.

⁶ *ib.*, XXXII., 198.

⁸ *ib.*, XXXII., 703-15.

distresses of France did nothing to alleviate the distresses of England ; and increasing misery gave point to the Peace party's argument that it was as possible for us as for other countries to treat with a Republic.

Moreover, the policy of our Austrian ally was a very uncertain quantity. During the greater part of 1795 Count Thugut had been too much afraid of developments in Germany, of Prussia perhaps attacking Bohemia, to contribute much to the "common cause." It almost came to a bargain with France, by which France would have kept Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine, and Austria would have acquired Bavaria and the Milanese. Not till the autumn were Austrian military operations of any importance, when Generals Clerfait and Wurmser drove the French back from German territory across the Rhine, and threatened France with an invasion in the campaign of 1796. This prospect was calculated to dispose the French to peace. Moreover, after great political convulsions, the Directory had come into being that autumn, with its two chambers, a Council of Five Hundred, and a Council of Ancients (over forty), and, though all the five Directors had voted for the death of Louis XVI., Pitt seized the opportunity of announcing in the King's speech of December 8th, 1795, that the new government was sufficiently regular to treat with and to permit an expression of readiness to negotiate for a general peace.¹

But, though peace was in the King's speech, it was not in his heart. From the time the war began its great support was the King. It gave the King "infinite pleasure" when in February, 1793, Fox's five resolutions against the Government's war policy were defeated by 270 to 44. On May 6th, 1794, his opinion was that a premature peace ought not to stop the war. On May 28th, 1795, the defeat of Wilberforce's motion for a general pacification by 201 to 86 was "highly agreeable" to him, particularly as "the temper of the majority appeared to

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 570.

be strongly in favour of perseverance in the war." On November 18th, 1795, he wrote to Pitt of the impossibility "for any country to treat with that unprincipled nation," the French. On January 27th, 1796, he sent Pitt his objections to any peace negotiations. So, as Stanhope justly says, the King's strong feelings for war were "among the principal difficulties with which his Ministers had to contend."¹

¹ Life of Pitt, II., 366.

CHAPTER V

1796. The First Peace Failure

LORD MALMESBURY said that even when Pitt "declaimed the loudest, and with the greatest emphasis, for a continuance of war, his real and genuine opinion went for peace." And perhaps the highest proof of the quality of his statesmanship is that, in spite of the King, and of Lord Grenville, his Foreign Secretary, and of public opinion, he made three attempts in 1796 to stop the war.

The first was early in the new year, when Grenville instructed Wickham at Berne to sound the Directory through Barthélemy as to its disposition towards a general peace and a Peace Congress. Barthélemy, on March 26th, affirmed the existence of such a disposition, subject only to the condition that the latest French Constitution made all territory of the Republic inalienable.¹ This seemed to exclude the possibility of mutual restitutions, and Pitt not unnaturally dismissed the reply as meaning that France was to have every loss restored to her and to give nothing back in return.² Lord Auckland thought Barthélemy's answer "stupid, ill-conceived and insolent,"³ though Wickham himself did not consider it as indicating an insuperable aversion to peace,⁴ nor should it have been treated as final.

Grenville expressed himself as greatly surprised at an answer so little in harmony with the distressful state of France, but added significantly that it "played our game for us better than we could have hoped," as tending to

¹ Ann. Reg., 1796, II., 125, 6.

² Parl. Hist., XXXII., 1137.

³ Wickham, I., 340.

⁴ *ib.*, I., 336-9, 352.

raise discontent in France with the Directory.¹ Wickham had the whole correspondence circulated in Paris and the provinces as proof of the sincerity of England's wish for peace, telling Grenville that this would prove a most powerful engine for all who wished to attack or embarrass the French Government.² But it had no effect whatever.

As the game that Wickham was playing must have been well understood in France, he was the worst possible negotiator to have chosen. The transport of arms, powder, and money, into France through the Canton of Berne had long made Wickham an object of suspicion,³ and in November, 1795, the Royalist papers, seized on the frontier on one of his agents, must have contained damaging allusions to his name.⁴ It also made Wickham an unlucky harbinger of peace that Count Thugut would not allow the Austrian Minister in Switzerland to sign the peace overture, so that its signature by Wickham alone seemed to indicate that it came only from England, not from the whole Coalition.⁵

Sir George (later Lord) Macartney had been sent by Grenville in August, 1795, to Verona, then the brief residence of the exiled French King, to whom Grenville sent dispatches, in the interests of a restored monarchy; and, though in the debate of May 10th, 1796, Pitt effectively answered Fox's criticism that the whole negotiation had been insincere, he left unanswered Fox's contention, that the recall of Lord Macartney would have done something to convince the Directory of the sincerity of the overture.⁶

Pitt renewed peace overtures in May, but they too failed. In his pacific course he "had great difficulties to contend with. The King was greatly adverse."⁷

But in October he resolved to try again. For, as the year wore on, military events occurred between May and

¹ *ib.* I., 343. April 15th.

² *ib.*, I., 354, 5.

³ *ib.*, I., 254.

⁴ *ib.*, I., 218.

⁵ *ib.*, I., 293, 4.

⁶ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 1093-1137, 1116.

⁷ Stanhope, II., 371.

October, which much changed the situation. For it was the year of Bonaparte's famous Italian campaign. With the aid of the troops which the peace with Spain enabled him to withdraw from the Pyrenees he rapidly became master of Italy. The conquest of Piedmont forced our Sardinian ally out of the Confederacy on May 15th, 1796. He was compelled to cede Nice and Savoy and all of Piedmont west of the highest Alps, and to allow a free passage to the French troops. This made easy the conquest of Austrian Lombardy, completed, on June 30th, by the fall of the garrison of Milan. The withdrawal of Gen. Wurmser's forces from the Rhine had removed all danger of an invasion of France, and after the five days' battles of Lonato and Castiglione, so fatal to the flower of the Austrian Army, no Austrian forces remained north of the Adige. These and other victories led up to the great French victory at Arcola on November 18th, 1796.

Nor till the month of August were French successes in Germany less decisive than those in Italy. Generals Moreau and Jourdan had carried their invasion into the heart of Germany. The Duke of Wurtemberg and the Margrave of Baden had been glad to make their peace with France on the moderate terms of withdrawal from the Confederacy and the cession of their territories west of the Rhine.¹ Immense plunder marked the Germanas it did the Italian campaign, war being thus made to pay its own way ; and it looked at one time as if Bonaparte's scheme for an attack on Vienna by his own force operating from the south through the Tyrol in conjunction with the double invasion through Germany might be crowned with success. Prussia, with an eye to the share in the spoils of Austria, looked on with complacency.² Saxony and Bohemia were menaced, and so serious grew the alarm at Vienna that the Emperor contemplated its abandonment. The Diet at Ratisbon on July 30th (except Austria

¹ Ann. Reg., 1796, II., 221-6.

² *ib.*, 1796, 131.

and Bohemia) resolved to negotiate a peace with France, and remonstrated with Francis II. for his opposition to stopping the war. But then the tide had turned, and from August 24th the French had been in constant retreat before the victorious Archduke Charles, and been thankful when in the last week of October they had effected a safe re-crossing of the Rhine.

But our maritime gains were a set-off to those of France on the Continent. The West Indian Islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenada had surrendered to us in May and June ; French commerce was commonly spoken of as destroyed. And the alliance of Holland with France had thrown all the foreign possessions of our ally, the Stadtholder, into our hands : the Cape of Good Hope on September 17th, 1795 ; the settlements of Essiquibo and Demarara ; Ceylon, Cochin and Malacca ; the islands of Amboyna and Banda, and their dependencies, with vast treasures of cloves, nutmeg and mace. And these great losses had been aggravated by Elphinstone's capture of the Dutch squadron in its vain expedition to recover the Cape in August, 1796. Spain, in September, 1796, changed her treaty with France of the previous year into an offensive and defensive alliance. Yet French soldiers in France had not been paid for months ; even contractors had to forgo their profits ; the hospitals were terribly neglected ; nor could the police cope with the internal disorders of the country.

Circumstances therefore seeming to favour a peace on the basis of mutual restitutions, Pitt came round to Fox's view that there was nothing degrading in making the first overtures of peace, and the newly elected Parliament was informed on October 6th, 1796, of the King's intention to send an envoy to Paris to negotiate with the enemy. So to Paris went Lord Malmesbury, nicknamed " the Lion," by reason of his fine eyes and leonine white locks, to try to succeed in a field where Wickham had failed. His credentials, dated October 13th, 1796, gave him the

fullest possible powers to treat,¹ but Lord Grenville, as if frightened at the liberty thus given, reminded him that, except with Austria's consent, no peace could be made which did not restore to her all that she had lost, that is, the Netherlands and her Italian possessions.² This condition condemned the negotiation to almost certain failure from the start.

Lord Malmesbury's embassy, thus predestined to fail, turned chiefly on this crucial question of Belgium. Yet the French wanted peace. On October 17th Lord Malmesbury told Lord Grenville that he found "the cry for peace universal," and on November 11th he wrote to Pitt of "the country at large" as "much inclined to peace." The French Foreign Minister, Delacroix, was anxious to convince Malmesbury of the sincerity of the French desire for peace,³ but he also said that all the Courts of Europe thought England insincere in the matter. And Malmesbury felt the same distrust of the French, thinking that Delacroix was playing for retarding and defeating the negotiation.

So both diplomats beat the air, evading the real point at issue. We had begun by suggesting a peace based on mutual restitution of conquests, but it was not till November 17th that Delacroix definitely accepted this principle, and fairly pressed Malmesbury to make specific proposals. Malmesbury, lacking the courage to act on his own permitted initiative, referred the question back to Lord Grenville, who on December 10th wrote strongly against listening to any idea of leaving the Austrian Netherlands to France. On December 11th he insisted on the full restoration to the Emperor of all his dominions (according to the treaties of August 30th, 1793, and May 20th, 1794). But he added that proposals for compensations elsewhere should be considered. On December 15th Grenville's specific proposals reached

¹ Ann. Reg., 1796, II., 172, 3.

² Diaries, III., 266.

³ *ib.*, III., 333.

Lord Malmesbury. They came in the form of *demands*, of which the chief were: (1) the restoration of all the Emperor's dominions as before the war; (2) a negotiated peace between France and the Empire; (3) the evacuation of Italy, and a return, as far as possible, to pre-war conditions. In return the liberal offer was made of the restoration by Great Britain of all the conquered French territories in the East and West Indies; of St. Pierre and Miquelon; and of French fishing rights off Newfoundland.¹

The proposal about Holland was that there could be no question of restoring her captured colonies, unless she reverted to her old Constitution and recognised the rights of the House of Orange.

The proposed restitution of the captured French colonies was a considerable concession; but at that time Delacroix was among the many French disciples of Turgot who held that the internal development of France was a surer source of wealth than foreign possessions.² Moreover, it was part of Pitt's peace bargain that we should retain the many conquests we had made from Holland; otherwise their restitution to Holland would only be an addition to the power of France.³

As Fox said, we meant to keep The Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon "for ever."⁴

With correct foresight Delacroix argued that ultimately the Cape would be of far greater importance to England than Belgium would be to France, and that with Ceylon and the Cape in our hands all French Eastern possessions would be held at our mercy.⁵ Fox argued that we should have offered the Cape in return for Belgium,⁶ which would have better equalised our offers with our demands.

On this rock the peace was wrecked. On December

¹ *ib.* III., 342.

² Malmesbury's Diaries, III., 334, 5.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 1455.

⁴ *ib.*, XXXII., 1479.

⁵ Malmesbury, III., 359.

⁶ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 1481.

17th Delacroix declared it constitutionally impossible for the Directory to give back the Austrian Netherlands, but he suggested as an equivalent the secularisation of bishoprics in Germany and Italy, and of those of Cologne, Mainz and Treves. Malmesbury hinted at compensations on the German side of the French frontier; but insisted that the King would never relax nor consent to see the Austrian Netherlands part of France.¹ On Delacroix's asking whether this was a *sine qua non* of peace, Malmesbury replied that it certainly was a condition from which His Majesty would not depart; ² yet not without intimating that any counter-proposals would be considered, provided the Netherlands were not French, nor likely to fall into French hands.

Thus after two months of diplomacy a deadlock was reached. On December 20th, 1796, Malmesbury received notice to leave France within forty-eight hours. He left next day, reached London on December 29th, and dined happily with Pitt the same evening. Burke's comment in a letter to Windham of December 25th was: "This mongrel (Malmesbury) has been whipped back to the kennel yelping, and with his tail between his legs."³ On someone's remarking on the length of time it had taken "the Lion" to reach Paris, Burke replied that it was not to be wondered at, seeing that he had to go there on his knees.

Windham had been almost alone in the Cabinet in opposing negotiations, and early in 1797 the King complimented him on his firmness.⁴ Windham had written on September 30th, 1796, to Mrs. Crewe: "Peace made and the Republic established; there is an end of the power, independence, government, morals of this country, as well as of every other throughout Europe;" those who wanted peace were mere "booby politicians;" he would have left the Cabinet long ago

¹ Diaries, III., 355.

² *ib.*, III., 360.

³ Windham Papers, II., 35.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 19.

had he felt sure that Malmesbury's "despicable embassy" would succeed.¹ Nevertheless, he preferred to stick to office in a Cabinet of these "booby politicians:" a man chiefly memorable for his failure as a war administrator, and for the success of his speech on May 24th, 1802, in causing the House of Commons to reject a Bill for making illegal the barbarous custom of bull-baiting.²

Windham thought his friend Burke deserving of a golden statue from the country.³ But Sheridan, in criticising Burke's pension, held that he had contributed "very considerably" to involving us in the war,⁴ and Fox was of opinion that his "masterly performance," the "Thoughts on the French Revolution," by which he had charmed the world with the brilliancy of his genius, had done much to plunge us into the calamities of war.⁵

Fox's complaint that the Government had not sincerely desired peace, but only hoped to get credit for pacific intentions is not borne out by Lord Malmesbury's account of the negotiations.⁶ At the same time, it is remarkable that on March 4th, 1797, the King wrote a letter to Pitt, presuming that his Minister would rejoice with him over Lord Malmesbury's failure.⁷ How could the King have so written, had he thought that Pitt would be disappointed? Grenville would naturally have rejoiced, but why Pitt? Can it be that the terms had been purposely pitched so high as to ensure rejection? Or had the French been insincere? Alison thought so, because of their preparations for the invasion of Ireland, and the great hopes they derived from it. Gen. Hoche's large armament, of which Wickham had warned Grenville from July 3rd onwards, set sail two days after the rupture of the negotiations, only to meet with that

¹ *ib.*, II., 24, October 31st, 1796.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 380.

⁵ *ib.*, XXXII., 1104, May 10th, 1796.

⁶ Diaries, III., 258-368.

² *ib.*, II., 189.

⁴ *ib.*, XXXII., 263.

⁷ Stanhope, III., app. 2.

frustration by the friendly elements which has so often contributed to our safety. Not a French soldier, Wickham said, but had looked forward before the winter to his share in the plunder of London.¹ But it is incredible that hopes of such success were "the principal motives for breaking off the negotiation," as Alison says. For Alison forgot that a few pages earlier he had quoted the Directory's secret report to Bonaparte of December 20th, 1796, which ran: "The people ardently desire peace; their murmurs are loud that it is not already concluded. The Legislature desires it, commands it, no matter at what price, and its continued refusal to furnish to the Directory the necessary funds to carry on the contest is the best proof of that fact. The finances are ruined; agriculture in vain demands the arms which are required for cultivation. The war is becoming so universal as to threaten to overthrow the Republic."² Yet we are asked to believe that they wished to continue the war for the chance of a successful invasion in Ireland; as if they could have wished both to continue the war and to stop it at identically the same date.

As the peace had suffered shipwreck on the question of Belgium, it might have been expected that the Peace Party would have desisted from their demand for further negotiation. But that it did not do so is shown by Fox's reference to Belgium at the close of the year: "However great the value of Belgium may be, is it an object of such immense consequence as to justify the continuance of a long, a hazardous and destructive war? Is it worth being contended for at the expense of such blood and treasure? And even if the objects be deemed so valuable as to justify all these sacrifices, there is another question to be considered. If in addition to that expense and carnage with which the war has already been attended it be proper to sacrifice a hundred millions more, and a hundred thousand

¹ Corresp., I., 379.

² II., 148.

men for its attainment, it ought also to be shown that it is attainable by those means. From the experience of the past, who will pretend to say that a continuance of war . . . will tend ultimately to bring you nearer to your object? " (December 30th, 1796)

Fox was right; for, could it have been foreseen that within a few months Belgium was destined to be ceded by Austria to France, probably not even George III. would have made its restoration to Austria an essential condition of a peace that might otherwise have been effected.

CHAPTER VI

1797. Second Peace Failure

AFTER the overwhelming French victory at Rivoli, on January 14th, 1797, had placed practically the whole of Italy at the mercy of France, the desire of the Directory for peace was shown by their authorising Gen. Clarke to sign a peace with Austria, on the basis of the restoration of all French conquests in Germany and Italy in return for Belgium and the Rhine frontier. But Bonaparte would not hear of negotiations till Mantua had fallen.

At last after a seven months' siege Mantua did fall, the brave Austrian General Wurmser capitulating on February 2nd. The fall of this great bulwark of Italy ended for two years the power of Austria in the Peninsula. Bonaparte's great Italian victories of the previous year, by diverting Germany's armies from the Rhine, had saved France from that intended invasion which it had been hoped would have ended in the fall of Paris. No wonder that on February 17th, 1797, Wickham could write to Grenville of "a general desire for peace at almost any price as the prevalent feeling in France."¹ Nevertheless, the war went on, heedless, as always, of "the general desire."

The French campaign against the Papal States resulted, on February 19th, in the withdrawal of the Pope from the Coalition. His cession to France of Avignon and other territories in France : of Bologna, Ferrara and Romagna, to say nothing of money, pictures and statues, was marked by a rapacity on the part of the spoilers which hardly accords with the testimony of an English contemporary writer that Bonaparte "sought upon all occasions to adopt measures of lenity."²

¹ II., 10

² Ann. Reg., 1797, 19. Alison, III., 126.

In France there was some talk of giving Bonaparte the title of *Italicus*. In vain the Emperor's brother, the Archduke Charles, strove to resist the French advance, which, pursuing the Austrians into the heart of the Tyrol, soon threatened Vienna itself with a siege. In vain did Bonaparte make direct overtures of peace to the Archduke in a letter which dwelt on the futility of further slaughter (March 31st, 1797) ; the Archduke only replied with the pedantic plea of lacking authority to negotiate. Yet five Austrian armies had been driven from Italy with immense loss ; the Bank of Vienna had stopped payment ; and the French, again across the Rhine, had come within easy distance of Frankfurt. An armistice became a necessity, followed by peace preliminaries between France and Austria, signed at Leoben on April 18th, 1797, and based on the surrender of the Austrian Netherlands to France.

The Venetian episode followed, and the entry of the French into Venice in May brought to an end the old Republic of Venice after a life of many centuries. The treaty of Campo Formio on October 17th, completed the separate peace between France and Austria. The Austrian Netherlands were transferred to France, and several of the Ionian islands ; whilst Venice herself and much of her dominions, despite express orders to the contrary from the Directory, which protested strongly against both the perfidy and impolicy of the act, were signed away by Bonaparte to Austria, and the Emperor recognised in the Cisalpine Republic his former possessions in Lombardy. It was arranged that a Congress at Rastadt within a month should settle a peace between France and the German Empire.¹

Thus our last ally, save Portugal, had been detached from us ; nor were other reasons wanting to induce Pitt again to attempt a negotiation. We had ceased to fight on the Continent, where, bereft of our mercenary allies, we could do nothing ; and on the sea our supremacy

¹ Ann. Reg., 1797, II., 342-5.

began to be threatened. Not indeed by any single Power ; for, as Grenville said on May 2nd, 1796, not a frigate could leave a French port but would be brought in triumph to our ports¹ ; and, as Pitt declared on October 18th, 1796, our fleet was more formidable than at any other period in our history,² but by the combined force of more than seventy French, Spanish and Dutch ships, designed after joining forces at Brest to invade our coasts. This scheme, though frustrated by the decisive victory on February 14th, off Cape St. Vincent, by Admiral Jervis (Lord St. Vincent) over the large Spanish contingent of twenty-seven ships, had revealed a danger which the French naval failure at Bantry Bay in December, 1796, had tended to conceal. And thus, though the French landing at Fishguard on February 23rd, 1797, failed miserably, invasion had become clothed with more real terrors than before.

It was one of the causes that led to that run on the Bank of England which compelled it to stop payment in specie on February 27th, 1797. Other causes were our enormous remittances to the Emperor, and the arrears of pay to the services. The Bank of Vienna also stopped payment, whilst in September, 1797, the two French Councils struck off two-thirds of the national debt, thereby reducing the annual charge from ten million pounds to less than four.³ Thus in one year three of the chief belligerents became bankrupt, and the same financial embarrassment on which Pitt had relied for victory over the French fell upon ourselves. Within a year stocks had fallen twenty-seven per cent. ; the five per cents. had dropped from 100 to 72½, and the three per cents. from 69½ to 49½. But financial difficulties never stop a war ; within a short time the Directory set its finances on a firmer basis, whilst Pitt proposed and carried a further loan of £1,800,000 to our

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXII., 1051.

² *ib.*, XXXII., 1209.

³ Alison, III., 446, 586.

defaulting Austrian ally, or three and a half millions in all.

The country had naturally become restive, and petitions from the chief cities and counties poured upon the King to change his Ministers. The view of all these petitions was that by their fault we had been "plunged into a war, unparalleled in misery and destruction, which had nearly ruined our commerce, impoverished our manufacturers, depopulated our country, sapped the public credit and widely extended the most flagitious corruption."¹ Ministers, said Grey, on May 26th, 1796, had been suffered "to go on from failure to failure, adding misconduct to misfortune and madness to folly." Four years of war had cost £200,000,000 and 200,000 lives. The Ministerial platitudes, by which Pitt had so long sustained the war, had lost their charm, and the delusion of the people was turning to anger. Pitt saw that it was time, if possible, to stop.

So he again turned his thoughts to peace, in spite of Lord Grenville, who was, Lord Malmesbury says, "invariably against peace from the beginning,"² and in spite above all of the King, whose opinion, as expressed in a letter of February 28th, 1797, was that "any negotiation at this period would be destruction, for it would be entailing every evil we have been avoiding for a momentary ease." Burke's "Regicide Peace" had found a responsive echo in the highest quarter. When on April 9th Pitt gave it as his opinion and that of the Cabinet that peace negotiations should be opened at the earliest opportunity on the basis of leaving France in possession of Belgium and with Holland as a dependency, the King replied that his personal opinion in favour of war had not changed, and that whilst he must acquiesce in such a step, he would nevertheless deplore it from the bottom of his heart.³ The Royal opinion was that "this

¹ Ann. Reg., 1797, II., 84-90.

² III., 595.

³ Stanhope, III., 52.

country had taken every humiliating step for seeking peace which the warmest advocates for that object could suggest," which was as good as telling Pitt that in his Master's opinion he was no better than Fox. And when Grenville wished to break off negotiations on an informality in the reply of Delacroix, the French Foreign Minister, which readily accepted the renewal of overtures, Pitt insisted on proceeding, on the ground that he regarded it as his duty "as an English Minister and a Christian to use every effort to stop so bloody and wasting a war," and this he said repeatedly—a rare instance of a War Minister avowing the influence of Christian motives. Grenville reluctantly assented, but insisted on the King's being informed of his dissent.

It was probably a mistake to send "the Lion" a second time, and Delacroix agreed grudgingly to his appointment; "another choice would have seemed of happier augury for the speedy conclusion of peace," he said. Pitt told Malmesbury, starting on June 30th, that he wished to stifle all feeling of pride that might impede a peace, but though Malmesbury was now as sincere as Pitt in desiring peace, he was not of a disposition to oil the wheels of negotiation by a conciliatory bearing. "I pledge myself," he wrote to Canning on August 14th, 1797, "to fight desperately every inch in the East and West; *to cavil at the ninth part of a hair*; to wrangle till I am hoarse for titles, dignity, treaties, ships and what not."¹

Unpromising for peace as was this attitude, the Conference at Lille, begun on July 6th, between Malmesbury and the French plenipotentiaries, started with more promise of success than the negotiations at Paris in the preceding year. For as Belgium or the Austrian Netherlands, together with Lombardy, had been surrendered by Austria at Leoben on April 18th, 1797, we could no longer insist on Belgium's restoration to Austria as an

¹ Diaries, III., 464.

essential peace condition. But mutual concessions in other directions were difficult: the French still insisted on the inalienability of their conquests, whilst Holland and Spain were indisposed to suffer exchanges for our concessions to France to be made at their expense, by giving up their claims to Ceylon, the Cape, Trinidad and other settlements. But a time came when the Directory informed France's Dutch and Spanish allies that they must either meet the English demands by releasing France from her engagements or continue the war alone.

There were other minor difficulties. The French wished that George III.'s title of the King of France should be expunged from the preamble of the treaty; they asked for the restitution of their ships taken by Lord Hood at Toulon in trust for Louis XVII. as taken in trust for the nation, or for compensation for the same; and they desired Belgium to be released from the mortgage due from the Emperor as security for our loan to him. Even Grenville did not regard these points as insuperable, but to Malmesbury they seemed "extravagant pretensions," "wild proposals."²

In the Directory both President Carnot and Barthélemy were for accepting the English conditions of restitution, and it was through Barthélemy that Maret, always for peace, had been one of the three sent to Lille; but the three other members of the Directory were less pacific, though the substitution of Talleyrand for Delacroix as Foreign Minister in mid-July promoted considerably the chances of peace.

Meantime the "eager disposition for peace", which Malmesbury found in France, was reflected in England. Canning, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, wrote of his inability to think, speak or write about anything but the expected peace; he could not go to bed, eat, drink, sleep, walk or ride for his impatience for the return of a

¹ August 14th, 1797. *ib.*, III., 459.

² *ib.*, III., 390, 413.

messenger from Lille announcing the making of peace.¹ He recognised the need for peace at almost any price. When Windham said that we must not have it, Canning asked him, "Can we have war?" ; it was out of the question ; we had not the means.²

But the longing of both countries for peace was defeated by events. And on August 11th an incident occurred which increased the growing mistrust ; the Minister of our Portuguese ally, against the orders of his Court, signed a separate peace with France, of which one condition was to exclude more than a limited number of our ships during the war from the use of Portuguese ports. This would have made it difficult for us so to blockade or watch Cadiz as to obstruct such a junction of the Spanish and French fleets as might expose our coasts and our West Indian colonies to invasion and attack. Grenville took a much more serious view of this affair than either Pitt or Malmesbury. The latter thought it better policy to let it pass than endanger the peace by insisting on the Queen of Portugal's not ratifying the treaty. He thought peace would debilitate France and check her influence ; whereas another year of war might enable her to fight on to a point that might be fatal to us. " I am the more anxious for peace because, in addition to the commonplace reasons, I am convinced that *peace will palsy this country* (France) most completely ; that all the violent means they have employed for war will return upon them like a humour driven in, and upset entirely their weak and baseless constitution. This consequence of peace is so much more to be prized than the very best condition we could insert in the treaty that I would rather incur the disgrace of signing one in conformity to the strict *status ante bellum* than let France take the favourable chances and England run the risks of another campaign."³

¹ *ib.*, III., 393, July 12th,

² *ib.*, III., 397.

³ *ib.*, III., 519, August, 29th.

It would have been possible to suffer the treaty to pass with the erasure of the articles affecting our use of the ports, but the Government preferred to refuse to permit its ratification altogether, much to Malmesbury's disgust. On August 29th he complained bitterly to Canning of his difficulty in following the instructions of the Minister (Pitt) with whom he wished to act, and those of the Minister (Grenville), under whose orders he was bound to act. He contemplated resignation. He professed himself ready to face any difficulties so long as peace was really the end aimed at; "but if another opinion has been allowed to prevail—if the *real* end is to differ from the *ostensible* one—and if I am only to remain here, *in order to break off the negotiation creditably, and not to terminate it successfully*, I then, instead of resigning my opinion, must resign my office." He hoped the war party in the Cabinet had not gained the upper hand; and he deprecated the raising of our terms of peace: "if the demands are raised (and I fear I must in justice to truth add) if they are not a little abated in the ultimatum, a relapse will take place, and this country return to the same unpacific disposition it was in when we arrived;" the more pacific disposition of France "by no means whatever justified our rising in price."¹

It is thus clear that in working for Grenville Lord Malmesbury was working for a Minister in whose sincerity he had ceased to believe, and that Minister was the head of the British war party. Malmesbury lamented Pitt's weakness in relation to Grenville.² Pitt had meant to yield either the Cape or Ceylon rather than break off the treaty; but Grenville would yield neither. Yet, had the treaty not been broken off, Pitt would have carried his points at the cost of parting with Grenville.³ The misfortune was that he did not make the concession in time.

¹ *ib.*, III., 517-9.

² *Diaries*, III., 521.

³ *ib.*, IV., 128.

For in the midst of this struggle in the British Cabinet occurred, on September 4th, what Lord Malmesbury aptly called a political earthquake, the Revolution of the 18th of Fructidor. The triumph of the Directory over the Legislative Councils put an end to that plot for the revival of monarchy in France for which Grenville, Windham, Wickham and Gen. Pichegru had conspired so long and so recklessly. D'Entraigne's papers, seized at Venice and sent by Bonaparte to the Directory, showed that for his share in the plot Pichegru was to receive £40,000, plus £8,000 a year, as part of his reward. But the Directory's triumph also closed the door on peace. The two pacifist Directors, Carnot and Barthélemy, were among the sixty-two banished legislators. "*The most unlucky event that could have happened,*" wrote Malmesbury to Pitt on September 9th; "we were certainly very near attaining the great object of our wishes, and I fear we are now more driven out to sea than ever."¹

This proved only too true. Two days later the Legation of Letourneur and Maret, whose whole conduct Malmesbury described as having been "as straightforward and amiable as possible," was recalled, and other Ministers sent in their place. These began by reassertion of the principle, from which the first Legation had slightly receded, that all British conquests must be restored both to France and her allies as the price or basis of peace; if Lord Malmesbury's powers did not empower him to make this the starting-point, he must return to England for fresh powers within twenty-four hours. Malmesbury accordingly left Lille on September 18th, though not without some compunction for not waiting there for an answer from home to the French proposal.² And to Pitt next day he half apologised for so hurried a departure; for Pitt so lately as September 11th had told him that the recent Revolution had not affected his unalterable determination for peace, and on September 14th had said

¹ *ib.*, III., 541.

² *ib.*, III., 569: September 17th, to Grenville.

that he thought the Portuguese affair would prove no insurmountable obstacle to that end.¹

Thus the alleged insult to our ambassador closed the door on peace, but not at first decisively. The two French plenipotentiaries remained at Lille, as if expectant of Malmesbury's return; and Malmesbury himself spoke of his business as "unfinished," pending a reply to the French note of September 16th. Feelers were put out from the French side for a pecuniary settlement; it seemed that the Dutch might give up Ceylon for £500,000;² on September 22nd Pitt agreed with Malmesbury in thinking it right to continue the negotiation; and he must have acceded to the pecuniary suggestion, for Malmesbury hoped that Pitt had been very explicit "both as to the terms and the price," and that not a penny should be given till after ratification. Barras was the only French Director in the secret, but he hoped to get his co-Director Rewbell to take a share of the bribe. Pitt was more sanguine of success than Malmesbury, who, admitting Barras' wish for the money, doubted his power to deliver the thing purchased.³ And, considering that the war was to end after four more years with the restoration of all our conquests but Ceylon in the East and Trinidad in the West, great must be the historical regret at Pitt's failure to effect a settlement on these pecuniary lines.

But the diplomatic notes that concluded the negotiation only stiffened each side against the other. The French, persisting in an avowed wish for peace, declined to withdraw from their demand for a total restitution of our conquests, and gave till October 16th as the term to which they would treat the negotiation as still open. But on October 5th the reply of Lord Malmesbury amounted to a refusal of further parley,⁴ and therewith the war was renewed.

¹ *ib.*, III., 554, 577.

² *ib.*, III., 580.

³ *ib.*, III., 583.

⁴ *ib.* III., 589.

Although the diplomatic correspondence, laid before Parliament,¹ formed a text on which Pitt and Grenville found it easy to convince Parliament of the insincerity of the Directory throughout the negotiations, and so to obtain a virtually unanimous vote for the continuance of the war, only mere glimpses of the negotiations were vouchsafed to the cognisance of Parliament ; not a word of the rift in the Cabinet about Portugal, of the opposition between Pitt and Grenville, nor of Pitt's readiness to effect a pecuniary bargain with Barras. Not till Lord Malmesbury's grandson published his *Diaries and Correspondence* in 1844 were these things generally known. Of the blame for the failure to make peace at that date the shares must be divided between Grenville and the Directory. Pitt could audaciously say in Parliament that he for one had never been so duped as to believe in the sincerity of the Directory,² though his letters show that to the very end he had struggled and hoped for a successful issue of Lord Malmesbury's embassy. Why have treated at all, if he had thought the Directory insincere from the beginning? And Malmesbury wrote of the Directory a few years later as consisting during the Lille negotiations of men "all thinking sincerely and in earnest that the wisest of all measures for France was by peace to consolidate the power she had attained than by attempting to gain more."³ It is hardly possible that he failed at the time to impress Pitt with the same opinion.

Each country of course blamed the other for the rupture at Lille. In France a forged letter, ascribed to Lord Malmesbury, was used to prove his insincerity,⁴ and the Minister of the Interior had a musical piece, called "The Vengeance of France upon England," performed every evening at the theatres.⁵ Other consequences

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIII., 903-962.

² Parl. Hist., XXXIII., 1001.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1798, 40.

³ *Diaries*, IV., 61.

⁵ *ib.*, 1798, 42.

were violent declarations by the Directory and the Council of Five Hundred against England, "the most corrupting and corrupted of the Governments of Europe," threatening a descent on our coasts and the dictation of peace in London.

As contributory to this purpose the Dutch fleet set sail for Brest, fifteen ships of the line, and eleven frigates, to join in the projected invasion of Ireland; but only to meet with that defeat at Camperdown, after a fierce struggle, at the hands of Admiral Duncan (Lord Camperdown), which has made the October of 1797 one of the most memorable dates in the history of the British navy. The wholesale roasting of sheep attested the universal joy occasioned by this victory.

The misfortune was that each side disbelieved in the sincerity of the other. Whilst we mistrusted the French on account of their Irish invasion plan, the Directory laid stress, in the *Redacteur* of December 24th, 1797, on the Royalist agitation we kept up in La Vendée and elsewhere as evidence of our insincerity. Wickham never for a moment ceased from his plottings at Berne. On March 8th, 1797, he wrote to Grenville of "the persuasion firmly rooted in the mind of every Frenchman that the Powers now at war with France had no other object in view but the destruction and dismemberment of their country," such dismemberment to result from "exciting troubles in the interior of the country."¹ And as this was Grenville's hope and aim all the time, it is not surprising that the negotiation failed.

Notwithstanding the diplomatic failure, for which some of the responsibility rested with our Government, there was the usual cry for support of the Government on the plea of patriotic unanimity. To this appeal on behalf of a Government that had led the country to so disastrous a position Fox made a vigorous reply: "Is it not too much to call for unanimity in the further

¹ II., 14, 16.

prosecution of this war? They whose incapacity has been proved by a series of the most unvaried disasters call for unanimity? . . . Can they expect this unanimity? . . . He (Pitt) has uniformly each December stated the expense of the year millions under what it has turned out to be; and yet he calls for unanimity. He can expect no unanimity, and in truth there is no remedy for our evils but peace. And this is not all; we must have peace and repose, not merely by the change of ministers and their condign punishment, but by a thorough change and reform in the system which has brought us to this ruin, by a return to the principles of liberty, not of power" (December 14th, 1797).¹

And how often has not the same prayer been uttered since, with equal earnestness and equal futility, for a change of Ministers and their condign punishment! Nemesis too often turns a blind eye on the greater crimes of statesmanship. To the lesser sins of maladministration some penalty may attach, but the greatest of all crimes, a war that might be avoided or stopped, sets a Government on a pedestal of impregnable impunity from which nothing can shake it. No one ever learnt the truth of this political law more thoroughly than Fox.

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIII., 112-3-4.

CHAPTER VII

1798. France in Egypt

It admits of no wonder that in July, 1797, France had insisted on the removal of Wickham from Switzerland. A correspondence had long been carried on by him with the royalists in Switzerland and France under false names: Louis XVIII. being "La Marquise," Moreau "La Mariée," Pichegru "Baptiste," and so forth. On March 22nd, 1797, Wickham was convinced that money alone would do nothing with "La Mariée,"¹ and a direct offer of money from George III., though not in his name, to Tallien was "peremptorily refused."² But money and arms had long found their way by Wickham's agency through Switzerland into France, and in July the Directory demanded his recall on the ground that his mission had no reference whatever to the respective interests of England and Switzerland, but solely to exciting plots against the internal and external security of the French Republic.

The early months of 1798 saw the invasion and overthrow and revolutionising of Switzerland by the French, who, mistrustful of their peace with Austria, and desiring a barrier against her, made this a political excuse for a conquest as cruelly effected as it was bravely but vainly resisted. Atrocities belong to every war, but few things excited a more just indignation in England than those recited by Canning on December 11th, 1798: the murder of the chief magistrate of Soleure, after being paraded in barbarous triumph through the town; the

¹ II. 28.

² *ib.*, I., 396.

burning of Stans and other villages ; the throwing of women still alive into the flames at Sion.¹ The plunder of the Swiss Treasury was venial in comparison with these things. And it all ended on August 4th, 1798, in an offensive and defensive alliance between the French and Helvetic Republics which answered all the purposes of an annexation. The French thus obtained a free passage through Switzerland to Germany and Italy both in peace and war ; and French emigrants were cut off from any further enjoyment of an asylum in Switzerland.² The use by the Directory this year in their official documents and diplomatic transactions of the title of " the Great Nation " added almost more than France's military conduct to the resentment of her enemies.

Simultaneously with Switzerland the Papal States suffered very similar treatment ; also under the counsel and direction of Bonaparte. The conquest of Rome ; the expulsion of Pope Pius VI., and the indignities heaped upon him ; the wholesale plunder of churches and palaces under the reluctant Berthier, and despite strong protests against it by the French inferior officers and men ; the consequent insurrection suppressed with great slaughter, stand out as the chief incidents that attended the transformation of the Papal Government into the Roman Republic, after the French model, on February 16th, 1798. But great as were the iniquities of the conquerors, the evidence of the contemporary English chronicler is striking, that " in this great alteration of the principles and form of government the French adhered with remarkable fidelity to the solemn promise they had made . . . to all the people of Italy to commit no innovation in religious matters any further than to introduce liberty of conscience and the universal toleration of opinions on spiritual subjects."³ Five consuls and two Chambers took the place of the former government, and with the

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 53.

² Ann. Reg., 1798, II., 251-4.

³ Ann. Reg., 1798, 54.

new Republic, thus formed on the French model, an offensive and defensive alliance was the tie that bound the weaker Power to the will of the stronger.

Meantime the threat of invasion hung heavily over England ; great preparations being made in both France and England either for its success or its defeat. But, in addition to a military force at home of over 200,000 men, our naval superiority alone made an invasion impossible. From the beginning of the War to its close, whilst the British navy had risen from 153 sail of the line and 133 frigates, to 202 sail of the line and 277 frigates, that of France had fallen in the same time from 83 sail of the line and 77 frigates to 30 sail of the line and 35 frigates.¹ There is no known instance in modern naval warfare of a successful invasion of a country by a naval power nearly six times its inferior in strength. Such invasion can only hope for success from a rising to support it in the country invaded ; a condition, however, which was then supplied by Ireland, where the long intrigues between Irish conspirators and the French Directory aimed at such a result. But the Camperdown battle in 1797 had dispelled all present chances of success, and the Irish Rebellion, which began in May, 1798, could look for no serious aid from France. Such aid as came failed ludicrously ; as in the raid of three frigates on August 22nd, 1798, at Killala, which ended on September 8th, 1798, at the battle of Ballinamuck, or in the action on October 11th, 1798, when a French squadron of one ship of the line and eight frigates was taken or dispersed, Wolfe Tone being among the prisoners. The Irish rebellion collapsed miserably, leaving little record in history but the atrocities committed on both sides. Our sea power was supreme in every direction. It enabled us to take Trinidad from the Spaniards in February, 1797 ; to take Gozo, the dependency of Malta, and deliver the sovereignty of it to Naples in October, 1798 ;

¹ Alison, IV., 648.

and to recover Minorca, which had been lost in the preceding war, in November of the same year.

But we were compelled to evacuate St. Domingo (Hispaniola); that island of the West Indies, whose history since the Spaniards first gained it for civilisation in the seventeenth century has been probably the most miserable of any country on earth. The speaker who in 1797 had said that our attempt to conquer the island was as impossible as to scale the moon¹ had proved right; and the many millions we had so spent had been spent in pure waste.

It is doubtful whether Bonaparte ever at this time intended to lead "the Army of England" against our shores; after visiting in ten days of February, 1798, the chief northern harbours of France he decided against an impossible undertaking. To Cobenzl, the Austrian ambassador at Rastadt, he had said: "An army is assembled on the coasts of the Channel ostensibly for the invasion of England; but my real object is to march at its head to Paris, and overturn that ridiculous government of lawyers which cannot much longer oppress France." And, to judge from later events, this was probably the truth of the matter.

He turned his thoughts to Egypt. The seizure and colonisation of Egypt, first suggested by Vergennes, had been seriously contemplated by the Bourbon Court; but Bonaparte thought to strike at England through India, by intercepting the trade that was the main source of her wealth, possibly even by an Indian invasion, in conjunction with the scheme between France and Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore, to drive the English out of India altogether, as settled by the treaty of January 29th, 1798.² The failure of both these schemes, as also of the rebellion in Ireland, by which with French aid Ireland might have become a vassal republic, like those established

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIII., 897.

² Ann. Reg., 1798, II., 223.

on the continent, saved England from the evil chances which cast gloom on the first half of 1798. But that gloom was turned into gladness when news came of Nelson's great victory on August 1st, 1798, at the battle of the Nile. Gaily had the French fleet of thirteen ships of the line, 86 other vessels, and 400 transports left Toulon on May 19th, with 36,000 soldiers and 10,000 seamen; by terms arranged before leaving France the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John had surrendered Malta on June 11th, and with it the command of the Mediterranean. The battle of the Pyramids in July had dispersed the Mameluks under Mourad Bey, and given Cairo and Egypt into Bonaparte's hands; but Nelson's victory so totally wrecked the French armada, only two of the thirteen ships of the line escaping either burning or capture, as to change the whole aspect of the war. It shut up Bonaparte and his army in Egypt, cutting them off from their communications with France. It gave us the undisputed command of the Mediterranean, the trade of Turkey and the Levant. It was described in Parliament as "unparalleled in the history of any age or country," and the only criticism of Ministers was that by their misconduct the French army had not been captured as well as the fleet, nor Bonaparte been brought in chains to London.¹

But this great victory only served to give fresh life to the expiring war, and led to its great prolongation. Lord Lansdowne urged in vain that the victory should be seized as an opportunity for concluding a safe and honourable peace; a new Coalition and a new war was the only thought of Ministers.

On all sides were fresh stirrings of strife. At the close of October large parts of Belgium rose against the French, nor was the insurrection put down, with the usual horrors, till January, 1799. Malta rose against the French garrison and put herself under the protection of Paul I.

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIII., 1554.

of Russia. Naples entered into a defensive naval alliance with Great Britain on December 1st, 1798 ; but the result of her invasion of the Roman Republic was the compulsory flight of her king and royal family to Sicily, and the transformation of the Neapolitan monarchy into the Parthenopeian Republic. Turkey was emboldened to make an unnatural alliance for eight years with Russia against the common foe ; whilst England in the same month of December made a provisional treaty with Russia, by which Russia was to help the King of Prussia, if he would but join the war, with 45,000 men, and England was to pay Russia £225,000 plus £75,000 every month for her mercenary armies.¹

In vain Tierney raised a warning voice in his motion for peace on December 11th, 1798, against a new Coalition. The war, he said, was costing thirty millions a year ; it was dangerously increasing the power of the Crown ; Habeas Corpus was suspended, and freedom extinguished ; and, save in the House, the law had put every man to silence.² To his question whether we could put more trust than before in Powers that had proved so faithless to us as Austria and Prussia, Canning replied that their faithlessness proved nothing against a possibly greater faithfulness in Russia and Turkey. Confidence in Russia reached sublime heights. No one, said Pitt, with any appreciation of worth could doubt the sincerity of the sovereign of Russia, or fear lest that magnanimous prince would act with infidelity.³ Yet his Magnanimity very soon did so.

This Anglo-Russian alliance was a terrible misfortune ; for it was the bringing of Russia into the lists against France that closed all chances of peace, and gave fresh life to the war. The negotiations at Rastadt, begun in October, 1797, between France and the German Empire, had after infinite delays brought the disputant Powers

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1168-72.

² *ib.*, XXXIV., 32.

³ *ib.*, XXXIV., 1046.

within an ace of an agreement, which could hardly have failed to end in a general peace ; though the negotiations throughout had been much frustrated by the military preparations which had continued on both sides. The entry of Suwarow's Russians into Austria and their entertainment at Vienna by a great review on December 27th, 1798, had naturally alarmed the French ; nor was their declaration of January 2nd, 1799, surprising, that the permission by the Diet at Ratisbon to Russian troops to march through Germany would be treated as a violation of neutrality. This virtually put an end to further negotiations at Rastadt.¹

Negotiations did not immediately cease ; but the re-commencement of hostile operations between France and Austria led inevitably to fresh war with the Empire. The successes of the Archduke Charles, who by April, 1799, had driven Jourdan's army of the Danube out of Swabia, stiffened the Imperial deputies against any concession about the Russians ; and on April 7th the Imperial Commissioner announced his orders to quit the Congress and to revoke all previous concessions. This proved the end of the Congress, but it received its real death-blow from the atrocious murder on April 29th, of two of the three French plenipotentiaries on their departure from Rastadt on the evening of April 29th.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1799, II., 262.

CHAPTER VIII

1799 Russia to the Rescue

THUS Europe, after being at peace for nearly two years, renewed its war. England had increased her army and navy, and resolved again to try conclusions with France on the Continent, from which she had been absent so long. Austria aspired to the recovery of her lost dominions in Italy ; whilst Paul I. of Russia was all for the restitution of things as they were before the war ; for the restitution of absolute monarchy in France, and incidentally for Austria's restoration of Venice.

With Bonaparte and his army of 35,000 shut up in Egypt, and the forces of France dispersed to a degree of dangerous tenuity over the widely extended frontiers she had to defend, all things seemed possible to the new Coalition ; and for some months probable. The new campaign, begun in March, promised well for the Allies. The tide turned against France with the battle of Stockach (March 26th), which rendered necessary a retreat to and across the Rhine ; whilst the great victory won by the Austrians at Magnano was the first of many French disasters which were not to cease till they were driven from all of Italy save Genoa.

A few days after Magnano Suwarow, with 20,000 Russians, joined the Imperialists. He was the hero of the suppression of the Polish rising in 1794. Fox thus recited his title to fame on that occasion : " He entered the suburb of Praga, the most populous suburb of Warsaw (November 4th, 1794) ; and there he let his soldiers loose on the miserable, unarmed and unresisting people. Men, women and children ; nay, infants at the

breast were doomed to one indiscriminate massacre. Thousands of them were inhumanly, wantonly butchered.”¹

The combined Austro-Russian forces carried everything before them. In their retreat under Gen. Moreau the French lost 11,000 men before Suwarow entered Milan on April 29th, and Turin on May 27th. The Russian forces soon overspread Lombardy and Piedmont, and drove the French back to the tops of the Alps. In vain Gen. Macdonald was summoned to join Moreau in Lombardy with his army of 20,000, which could ill be spared from the Neapolitan territories. The three days' battle on the Trebbia in mid-June was the bloodiest of the war, costing the French some 12,000 casualties, and the Allies about the same, whilst the French lost as many prisoners in the battle and the subsequent retreat. It was with a very shattered force that Macdonald succeeded in reaching Genoa.

Italy and Switzerland must have been hells on earth in that summer of 1799. Passions on both sides became intensified, “the carnage became daily greater; the officers were more prodigal of their own blood and that of their soldiers.”² Four months of warfare cost the French and the Allied armies nearly half of their effective forces; 116,000 killed or mutilated men were the commentary on Pitt's favourite dictum that certain war was better than uncertain peace. And in this accumulation of human misery the Russian system of plunder shocked even the moral sense of a world which had learnt from the French the value of the supposed inviolability of private property from capture in land warfare. With the Russians, robbery was the predominant thought. The Archduke Charles complained that he had no idea of the plundering spirit of the Russians till he read the official reports from the army in Italy.³ They made themselves the dread of every country where they came.⁴

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1538; Sybel, IV., 146.

² Alison, IV., 124.

³ Wickham, II., 152.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 337.

The natives came to think of the French system of contributions, which fell equally on all according to their capacity, as "mercy when compared with the conduct of the Russians."¹ But, as the Russian soldier's pay was only three-farthings a day, he had to live off the country he invaded or not live at all. The Austrians thought that this conduct of their allies reflected on their own military honour; as in the case of Gen. Derfelden, who retired from the Austrian service "after writing to the Marshal (Suwarow) a letter full of the most cruel reproaches, which he concluded by saying that the honour of a soldier was contaminated by living with such a band of robbers as the troops whom the Marshal commanded."² Hence arose that coldness between the Austrians and Russians which resulted ultimately in their separation.

In this manner Italy was "liberated" from one foreign yoke only to fall under another. On July 21st Alexandria fell to the Allies, after being bombarded with 42,000 shells for seven days; Mantua was recovered from the French on July 30th; the great defeat of the French by Suwarow at Novi on August 18th, prevented the raising of the siege of Tortona, which surrendered on August 25th.

The same summer saw also the French and the republican Government driven from Naples. The retreat of General Macdonald from Naples to join Moreau in North Italy was the signal for a combined force of English, Russians and Neapolitans to enter the port. The dates are important for the sequence of events. On June 20th, 1799, Naples surrendered to Cardinal Ruffo, commanding the land forces of the Allies. On June 22nd, the castles of Uovo and Nuovo capitulated to him on terms which secured the rebels in their lives and properties, and which vice-Admiral Foote, of the *Seahorse*, signed on behalf of Great Britain. Subsequently the Cardinal

¹ *ib.* II., 158, 9.

² *ib.*, II., 362, Wickham to Lord Grenville, December 13th, 1799.

proclaimed an amnesty, on behalf of the King of Naples. On the evening of June 26th, Nelson took possession of the two castles, and on June 27th announced his possession of the city of Naples, the Castle of St. Elmo alone remaining to the enemy. The same day Admiral Trowbridge landed his English and Portuguese marines, and put garrisons of his own in place of the French and rebel garrisons. On the 29th he began the difficult siege of St. Elmo, which after severe bombardment capitulated on July 12th.¹ The fall of Capua and Gaeta at the end of July completed the liberation of the Neapolitan dominions, and put an end to the Parthenopeian Republic.

It has been contended that, as the Cardinal had orders to make no terms with the rebel garrisons, Nelson was justified in treating his capitulation as null and void because it had not been authorised by the King. But, if from the military standpoint the executions which followed were technically just, from the moral standpoint they were nothing short of iniquitous. Alison justly says that no apologies can or should be offered for them. The only conceivable apology, though it is none at all, is that even these Neapolitan atrocities paled before the shooting on March 10th, 1799, of the 4,000 Turks who had surrendered to Bonaparte four days before, at the storming of Jaffa, as narrated by Bourrienne, an eye-witness, and attested by Sir Sidney Smith's letter to Nelson of May 30th, 1799—one of the most horrible deeds in the black history of war.

The King returned to Sicily to avoid the sight of the coming vengeance. The victims on board, chained and bound two and two, quickly suffered the court-martial sentences; whilst on land the populace anticipated the sentences of the tribunals; "neither age, nor sex, nor rank were spared; women as well as men, youths of sixteen and grey-headed men of seventy, were alike led

¹ Ann. Reg., 1799, II., 75-7.

out to the scaffold.”¹ “Almost the whole of the late Legislative and Executive commissioners perished by the hands of the executioners, . . . some noble ladies were sacrificed to a spirit of vengeance.”² The old Neapolitan Admiral Carraccioli was strangled and thrown into the sea. On August 1st, Nelson was able to congratulate Lord Kieth, Commander-in-Chief, “on the entire liberation of the Kingdom of Naples from the French robbers.”³

The Roman Republic soon went the way of the Parthenopeian. On September 29th and 30th Admiral Trowbridge took possession of Civita Vecchia, Corneto and Tolsa; and at the same time by the same treaty General Bouchard took possession of Rome, and thus cleared the Roman State of the French invasion.⁴

Tuscany also freed herself from the yoke. Trees of liberty were cut down, and before the successful insurrection Macdonald had perforce to retreat, till on July 17th he gave orders for Leghorn and the whole of Tuscany to be evacuated by his troops. After the surrender of Coni, one of the strongest fortified places in Europe, on December 3rd, all that remained to France of her victories in Italy was Genoa and its district, and Genoa itself fell early in 1800. The Republican reverse was complete.

And whilst fortune thus beamed her brightest on the Allies in Italy, she was at first no less lavish of her smiles in Switzerland. An Austro-Russian army was to drive the French from Switzerland and invade France itself. When Wickham arrived in Switzerland on June 27th, 1799, to promote these aims, the rosiest hopes were legitimate. The King’s Speech of July 12th, 1799, laid joyful stress, not only on Suwarow’s brilliant victories in Italy, but on the recovery by a large part of Switzerland, under the Archduke Charles, of her ancient religion and liberties. About half of Switzerland had been recovered.

¹ Alison, IV., 95.

² Ann. Reg., 1799, 292.

³ *ib.*, 1799, II., 82.

⁴ *ib.*, 1799, II., 128.

But the best military plans are apt to go awry ; as they most fatally did in this instance. The plan of campaign was of English origin, and was based on that implicit reliance on Russian numbers which has so often caused repentance to trustful allies. "The plan of confiding Switzerland and the operations beyond Switzerland," wrote Lord Minto to Wickham on August, 24th, 1799, "to the Russian army was undoubtedly conceived in London and pressed on this Court" (Austria).¹ But Austria showed no heart for the plan.

Count Thugut, with his eye ever on Prussia, whose army was gaining strength from neutrality, thought mainly of sparing the Austrian army, and he had shown more apparent terror of Suwarow's progress in Italy than he ever had of the enemy's.² He had no real wish for the proposed attack on France, and did all he could to retard it.³ He cared little or nothing for Louis XVIII. From the beginning of the campaign he left the Archduke Charles without instructions, and in August sent him positive orders to withdraw from Switzerland.⁴ When, on the arrival of the Russians under General Korsakoff, the Archduke did withdraw, Thugut spread it abroad that it was in consequence of the positive orders of the British Court ; a calumny so generally believed that "the very name of an Englishman is become a word of reproach among them" (the Austrians), and confidence in the British Government entirely lost.⁵ By the end of August Wickham rightly feared a "most fatal termination of the campaign."

The Archduke's retirement in early September placed the whole of Italy and Switzerland in fresh danger. General Korsakoff was considered at St. Petersburg as "absolutely mad,"⁶ and on September 24th, in spite of

¹ Wickham, II., 170.

² Wickham, II., 215, Lord Minto to Wickham, September 14th.

³ *ib.* II., 217.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 125, 165.

⁵ *ib.*, II., 191, Wickham to Grenville, August. 31st.

⁶ *ib.*, II., 332.

him the French took Zurich. Suwarow arrived from Italy too late to save Zurich, nor did his arrival, after an Alpine march of indescribable difficulty, mend matters. For if Korsakoff was mad, Suwarow was worse. When Colonel Clinton once used the word "defensive," "Suwarow began to spit and show symptoms of anger very little short of madness."¹ When Wickham *dined* with him on October 17th, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., his behaviour was such that Wickham, but for knowledge of his sanity, would "certainly have taken him for a madman whose understanding was gone. . . he walked about the room with his hands and his head hanging like those of an idiot, talking nonsense to everyone"; after which he went to bed till 4 p.m., according to his constant custom.² When Wickham told Lord Minto that he had "softened down" this description as much as possible, Lord Minto concluded that instead of a great general and a great man, Suwarow was nothing but "an ignorant designing mountebank, besides being very mad and very mischievous as madmen generally are."³ But Suwarow had at least sense enough to love English ale, which he said was the only thing that kept him alive.⁴

The discord that prevailed between the Russians and Austrians reached such a height that in November, 1799, Paul I. wrote to George III. of his fixed resolve to recall his forces from Switzerland; and Suwarow was ordered back to the Russian frontier.⁵ Wickham wrote of his conviction that the Russian army was quite incapable of meeting the French on anything like equal terms. But the strange thing is that, despite this knowledge both about Suwarow and the Russian army, Wickham wrote to Suwarow on November 21st to say that George III. had so fallen in with Suwarow's plan for the next campaign as to have insisted on his being reinstated at the head of a combined Austro-Russian army! The king was ready to

¹ *ib.*, II., 301² *ib.*, II., 272.³ *ib.*, II., 340.⁴ *ib.*, II., 223.⁵ *ib.*, II., 329.

pay for reinforcements of 80,000 men, Russians, Swiss or Germans to serve under Suwarow.¹ And this in spite of Wickham's conviction that the Russian army was past reforming and that the retirement of Suwarow was the main thing desirable.²

The joint British and Russian expedition to Holland was one of the chief disasters of the whole war. It so far succeeded indeed that on August 30th, the whole Dutch fleet in the Texel surrendered to Sir Andrew Mitchell without the firing of a shot, much to the rage of the Batavian commander Storey, who declared that the traitors in his service refused to fight. The colours of the Prince of Orange were hoisted on the masts, and the British Government found some consolation for an expedition that cost £1,142,000 and 846 killed alone by the transfer to our naval service of 8,000 Dutch seamen.³ The Duke of York again identified the blood royal with military failure. For though he claimed the battle of Bergen on October 2nd as a signal victory, he admitted that it had been dearly bought. On October 9th the state of the weather, the ruin of the roads, the enemy's reinforcements led him to refer home for instructions to withdraw his troops from their advanced position. On October 20th he "felt that the most advisable measure to pursue was to remove with the army to England;" and in accordance with this feeling he concluded a Convention with General Brune on October 18th, 1799, which compelled him and the Russian forces to evacuate before the end of November every inch they had won in Holland. Brune at first stipulated for the restoration of the Dutch fleet and of 15,000 French and Batavian prisoners of war in England. But he yielded on the point of the fleet, and contented himself with 8,000 prisoners, who were thus recovered without ransom or condition of any sort. The expedition, as Sheridan said, had thrown discredit on the councils of

¹ *ib.*, II., 334.

² *ib.*, II., 408-10.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1415.

the Government and dishonour on its operations. The capitulation, said Tierney, fixed "an indelible stain on the national character"; 45,000 men in six weeks had only advanced twenty-five miles; a King's son, commanding 40,000 men, had capitulated to a French general who had only 31,000.¹ That was all there was to show for the treaty of June, 1799, with Russia, for the driving of the French out of Holland, at the cost of an immense subsidy to Russia. Nor did Russia forgive us for luring her into such a disaster.

Although the year 1799 was thus dying with the usual disappointment, there was the usual confidence about the next campaign. On November, 1799, Wickham wrote to Lord Minto that "in the opinion of all well-judging and well-informed people," another campaign, even without Russia, would place Austria in a situation to dictate the terms of peace to France.² How little these "well-judging people" foresaw the future, Marengo and Hohenlinden, and the Treaty of Lunéville, were soon to show. The Allies still relied mainly on a Royalist insurrection in France. Wickham drew encouragement from the fact that Generals Pichegru, Willot and De Preçy were "as steady friends of the House of Bourbon and of the ancient monarchy as any of the first emigrants in France."³ Since his return to Switzerland in June, 1799, Wickham had renewed his old plots for reviving the Royalist party in France, by resuming his former correspondence with agents in Lyons, Marseilles, Besançon and Paris. The plan was, that General Willot should leave Augsburg for Turin on February 20th, 1800, as head of the insurrection, and, after reaching Marseilles about mid-March, declare for the Royalist flag; arms and ammunition were to be landed for him by the British ships at different points of the coast. De Preçy was to be at the head of a similar movement at Lyons. The Swiss

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1418.

² Wickham, II., 338.

³ *ib.*, II., 357, December 9th, 1799.

were to penetrate into France to help the Royalists ; and both Pichegru and Willot wished a Royalist Prince to command them. A discreet proclamation, disclaiming conquest and promising pardon, was to be the preliminary step to the Royalist revolution. And Wickham assured Grenville that at the opening of the campaign his Majesty for less than £30,000 a month would have 5,400 infantry as fine as any in Europe.¹

Yet the French Royalists had so little love for their British allies that the most Royalist of their papers, the *Quotidienne*, actually accused Pitt of having been an accomplice in the murder of Louis XVI. Wickham felt keenly the bitter reproaches of this sort which the Royalists of France, both civilian and military, hurled loudly against the British Government. Nor was there any receding on their part from their determination to restore the ancient monarchy in all its vigour and to exact a vengeance from the republican party that would in no way have fallen short of the atrocities under Robespierre in the early years of the Revolution. It was "too evident," Wickham had told Grenville on September 7th, 1796, "that all views of humanity, of policy, of justice, even of interest are but light in the scale when opposed to the desire of humbling and punishing the first authors of the Revolution."² They would have nothing to do with Wickham's idea of the revived monarchy passing through a Constitutional stage in the first instance. Ready as they professed themselves to make many sacrifices, they "must all be grafted on the basis of the ancient Government."³ Nor did English statesmen, like Windham and Lord Fitzwilliam, scruple to say in Parliament, that it was to the restoration of the *ancient* monarchy in France that their hopes and desires tended.⁴

It was the knowledge of this fact that kept the war

¹ *ib.*, II., 400-8, December 25th, 1799.

² *ib.*, I., 451.

³ *ib.*, I., 432, July 21st, 1796.

⁴ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1054, 1062.

alive. The choice in France was between civil war and foreign war. Fox had always argued for our recognition of the Republic, which would have been but the recognition of facts. But George III. would recognise only the monarchy, though this country owed nothing to the Bourbon monarchy to make its restoration worth a single day's more bloodshed. And the war party, infatuated on the subject, was deaf to all counsels of peace and reason.

Meantime the unexpected had happened. Bonaparte, after his return to Egypt from his disastrous Syrian adventure, and after a battle at Aboukir on July 25th, 1799, in which many thousand defeated Turks are said to have flung themselves into the sea, sailed away from Egypt on August 23rd, and after a romantic voyage, landed at Frejus on October 5th. On November 4th, the 18th of Brumaire, he effected the new revolutions which transferred the supreme power from the Directory to a consular triumvirate, of which he was the First Consul. A new Constitution was promulgated on December 13th, 1799.¹

The Consulate stood for the close of the Revolution ; for a new era of moderation and conciliation. At the feast held in the Temple of Victory on November 7th, 1799, in honour of Bonaparte and Moreau, the first toast given by the President of the Directory was " Peace " ; the second, proposed by Bonaparte, was " The Union of all Frenchmen ; " and it was this idea of pacification at home and abroad which rendered the latest revolution popular. Even the English contemporary annalist attributed to Bonaparte at this time the character of " moderation, prudence and a regard, not only for civil rights, but also for religion." ²

At home this spirit was chiefly shown towards the emigrants and the insurrectionists in the West. To pacify the Vendéans and Chouans was no easy task. In November, 1799, Brittany and Normandy could still

¹ Ann. Reg., 1799, II., 142-50.

² *ib.*, 1800, 10.

show some 60,000 men in arms against the Republic, and proclamations were issued in the interests of Louis XVIII. The commissaries sent by the two Chambers to effect a peace repealed the law of hostages, by which the relatives of emigrants were made personally responsible for the disorders in their communes ; and this greatly contributed to the armistice which followed. Bonaparte's pacificatory proclamation of December 25th, 1799, had also a calming effect.¹ And although hopes of British and Russian aid helped to keep the rebellion alive, peace was finally effected on February 15th, 1800, and was followed by a general disarmament of the Royalists in all the departments. The moment was equally favourable for making peace abroad.

France had every motive for desiring peace. She had a large force imprisoned in Egypt ; Malta was closely besieged by the English and Portuguese ; the death of Tippoo Sultan at the capture of his capital at Seringapatam on May 4th, 1799, had destroyed all hope of any success in India ; all of Italy, save Genoa, was lost to France, and Genoa was in a frightful state of famine ; and, though France held all the left bank of the Rhine from Basle northwards, peace had become a matter of primary necessity, if she was to recover from the exhaustion of the war.

¹ *ib.*, 71, 2.

CHAPTER IX

1800. The Crushing of Austria

It was impossible for Bonaparte, who with all his faults was the most intelligent politician of his time, not to recognise the necessity of peace; and accordingly on December 25th, 1799, the very day on which he was constituted First Consul, he sent through Talleyrand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, a letter direct to George III. announcing his elevation to the position of first magistrate of France and suggesting in sensible terms a termination of the war in the interests of the civilised world. The letter by its address to the king deliberately departed from diplomatic etiquette with a view to the speedier attainment of its object.

Unfortunately, Lord Grenville was before all things pedantic. He replied stiffly that His Majesty saw no reason for departing from forms long established in Europe for the transaction of Foreign Affairs; His Majesty was only fighting against an unprovoked aggression, nor could he hope for a successful negotiation whilst in France the same causes and system prevailed which had produced and protracted the war. From the French "indiscriminate spirit of destruction" all Europe and the world had suffered, and only by continued resistance to the French system could His Majesty hope for the security of property, liberty and religion. Greatly as His Majesty would rejoice in the prevalence of "better principles" in France, only the experience of facts could convince him of such a change; and the best evidence would be "the restoration of that line of princes who for so many centuries maintained the French nation in prosperity at

home and in consideration and respect abroad." Not that His Majesty wished to prescribe to France her form of Government; whenever circumstances pointed to a possible security for himself and his allies, he would eagerly labour for peace; but whilst he could rely so little on the stability or principles of the new government, he could but continue that "just and defensive war" in which he was engaged.¹

It would have been difficult to conceive a worse answer; justly stigmatised by Erskine as "without necessity rash, insolent and provoking . . . as an answer to a pacific proposition dangerous to the universal interests of mankind; it rejected the very idea of peace, as if peace were a curse, and the demand of negotiation an insult; and held fast to war, as if war were an inseparable adjunct to the prosperity of nations."² Lord Suffolk said that it "would have disgraced a schoolboy."³ The wonder was that it did not close the correspondence. The French rejoinder of January 14th, 1800, denied that France had been the aggressor, and asserted that she had only been defending herself against a league for her destruction and dismemberment; fairly asked why George III., who had himself invited negotiations for peace in 1796 and 1797, should not be equally eager for them now; but concluded with an offer from the First Consul, in obedience to the voice of humanity, to make an immediate end of hostilities by an armistice, and a Peace Conference at Dunkirk or elsewhere for the restoration of friendly relations.⁴

But the British Government, "of convicted incapacity," as Sheridan styled it, was set on war at any price. Grenville's reply of January 20th, 1800, simply threw back on France the sole responsibility for the war, and repeated what amounted to a demand for the restoration of the Bourbons. Sheridan rightly said on February 10th,

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1197-1200.

³ *ib.* XXXV., 875.

² *ib.*, XXXIV., 1287.

⁴ *ib.* XXXV., 1202.

1800, that we were at war for the restoration of the Bourbons and nothing else ; and that all the qualifications which limited that proposition were mere quibbles.¹ Large majorities in both Houses supported the rejection of Bonaparte's overtures ; all the old sins or crimes of France were raked up as motives for continuing a punitive war ; and the stock platitude that no peace could be stable with France's new rulers served as an excuse for making war perpetual. The King above all was obstinate for indefinite war : " No disaster," he wrote to Pitt on January 28th, 1800, " could make me think the treating for peace wise or safe, whilst the French principles subsist ; " no confidence could be placed in the present French Government ; and his opinion, formed on principle, not on events, was " not open to change." So it was again full sail for war, with fresh subsidies of millions to the Emperor of Germany, the Elector of Bavaria, and other German mercenary States.

At the same time that he made his offer of peace to England Bonaparte sent pacificatory addresses to all the European Powers.² But his proposals to Austria were as unsuccessful as those to England, the Austrian Government being seized with the same " sort of delirium " for war that he ascribed to her English ally. Bonaparte proposed peace on the basis of the treaty of Campo Formio, but the advice of the Archduke Charles that peace should be made was scorned by the Austrian Government, and General Kray substituted for himself in the command of the German army.

In Egypt also a great opportunity for making peace was lost. General Kléber, left in command by Bonaparte on his departure, and taking a gloomy view of his situation, had resolved to continue the negotiations with the Porte that Bonaparte had begun. So negotiations were opened on December 21, 1799, on board Sir Sidney Smith's ship, the *Tiger*, Sir Sidney acting for the Grand

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1407.

² Ann. Reg., 1800, 71.

Vizier.¹ Owing to a tempestuous sea, which made a landing impossible, the conference lasted eighteen days, with the result that, after the taking of the fort of El-Arish by the Grand Vizier on December 30th, 1799, Kléber, disappointed by the non-arrival of a French and Spanish fleet with reinforcements and provisions, and despairful of resisting the superior Turkish forces, signed with Turkey the treaty of El-Arish on January 24th, 1800, which was to be ratified within eight days. As the French evacuation of Egypt was the great desire of both England and Turkey, he thought that his agreement to leave Egypt would be virtually the first clause in a treaty for the general pacification of all Europe. So he wrote on February 6th, 1800.² The French army was to be embarked in French or Turkish vessels for France, and the towns and fortresses in Egypt evacuated at different dates, during an armistice of three months. Sir Sidney Smith did not sign this treaty, but both he and Kléber regarded his assistance as committing the British Government to the acceptance of its terms. And it was unfortunate that they were not so accepted, as such acceptance might have finished the war.

But the British Government was unfairly charged with breach of faith. Anxious as they were for the French to evacuate Egypt, they had no wish for the French Egyptian army to be added to the French army in France. On their instructions therefore Lord Keith informed Kléber that no capitulation could be accepted that did not involve the surrender of the French army as prisoners of war. Kléber instantly on March 8th ordered his soldiers to renew the war, and his great victory over the Turks at Heliopolis on March 23rd preceded a series of operations which completely restored French power in Egypt. On the same date (March 8th) Sir Sidney Smith, receiving the instructions which nullified the convention of January 24th, expressed the great vexation he felt at having to warn the French

¹ *ib.* II. 222.

² Ann. Reg., 1800, II. 224.

against their intended embarkation. The British Government, though they disclaimed Smith's powers to treat with the French, when they learnt that he had done so, instructed Keith to stand by it, as is shown in Lord Keith's letter of April 23rd to Citizen Poussielgue: "I have given no orders or authority against the observance of the convention between the Grand Vizier and General Kleber, having received no orders on this head from the King's Ministers. Accordingly I was of opinion that His Majesty should take no part in it; but since the treaty has been concluded, His Majesty, being desirous of showing his respect for his allies, I have received instructions to allow a passage to the French troops, and I lost not a moment in sending to Egypt orders to permit them to return to France without molestation;" he only required that they should not return in a mass nor in ships of war, nor did he doubt that Kléber would allow no hostilities against the coalesced Powers.¹

The mistake being discovered, both sides endeavoured to renew the convention that had failed. But Kléber's assassination early on June 24th proved disastrous. The assassin was tried by a military tribunal under General Regnier, and the sentence was no less atrocious than the crime. The assassin, a youth of twenty-four, after having his right hand consumed by live coals, suffered impalement for four hours before he died, proclaiming with his last breath that Mahomet was the prophet of God.² General Menou succeeded to Kléber's place, but his refusal to agree to the evacuation of Egypt brought all negotiations to a close.

Thus both England and Europe paid dearly for the Grenville letter. On March 7th, 1800, the French Consuls issued a proclamation to the Republic, declaring that England's war aims were "to ravage France, to destroy her marine and her ports, to efface her from the map of Europe, or to degrade her to the rank of a secondary

¹ Ann. Reg., 1800, II., 226. ² Thibeaudeau's Consulat, I., 377, 8.

Power, to keep all the nations of the Continent divided in order to get possession of the commerce of all, and enrich herself by their spoils.”¹ France responded to Bonaparte’s call to resent the insulting replies to his overtures as readily as she responded to the same call by Louis XIV. under a similar rebuff in 1709; and the campaign that followed in Germany and Italy undid with amazing celerity the Allied victories of 1799. To the world’s surprise Bonaparte crossed the St. Bernard into Italy in the middle of May; the French again occupied Milan, evacuated by the Austrians, on June 2nd, and Pavia on June 5th; the very day on which Massena, after a siege, in which it is said that 15,000 Genoese died of hunger, had surrendered Genoa to the Austrians. Bonaparte had failed to arrive in time to raise the siege; but Genoa remained not long under her new masters. For the great battle of Marengo changed the face of things. As Bourrienne describes it: Bonaparte left Milan on June 13th, fought at Marengo on June 14th, and on June 15th Italy “was ours.” It had looked at one time like a victory for the Austrians, but Kellerman’s charge decided the day for the French, though with the loss of General Desaix, a host in himself, and better remembered than the nameless Austrian and French multitudes, whose courageous deaths gave Bonaparte his victory over the Austrian commander Melas. Melas had two horses killed under him, and a few days later Bonaparte sent him a Turkish sabre as a present, which was gracefully acknowledged with an expression of the Austrian’s admiration for his great rival.

But the armistice for which Melas was obliged to ask the day after the battle, the armistice of Alexandria, meant for France the complete reconquest of Piedmont and Lombardy and of twelve strong fortresses, including Genoa, Coni, and Savona. Tuscany for the present remained to the Imperialists; nor did the armistice apply to Germany.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1800, II., 268.

Marengo was fatal to any effective British co-operation with Austria. The severe winter had stopped all correspondence between London and Vienna from the end of December till the middle of March, but on February 22nd the Government resolved to send 20,000 men to the Mediterranean to the aid of our ally. Unfortunately the force under Sir Ralph Abercromby was so delayed in starting that it only arrived in time to hear of Melas' defeat, and to sail away from the roads of Genoa back into the Mediterranean. There was an end of all those dreams of the Austrians invading Provence, and, after taking Marseilles and burning Toulon, marching with the British forces from Minorca upon Paris. The Cisalpine Republic was declared again free and independent; North Italy rejoiced in its liberation from Austrian oppression; Bonaparte issued orders for religion and property to be respected; and in an address to the clergy at Milan proclaimed his intention to protect the Catholic religion.¹

In the meantime Moreau had been equally successful in Germany; the Rhine having been crossed on April 25th. Swabia and Franconia were overrun, and the Austrian General, Kray, was "amused," as the phrase then went, with feint attacks and marches. But after Marengo had made it no longer necessary to send French reinforcements into Italy, the invasion was pushed further. Moreau crossed the Danube on June 18th; drove the Austrians from their entrenched camp near Ulm, and occupied Munich. The Elector of Bavaria was obliged to pay as contributions a large sum out of the £500,000 which England had paid as a subsidy, and the same thing happened in the case of the Duke of Wurtemberg.

Thus Austria was forced to beg for another armistice, which was granted on July 16th. Driven by her calamities to desire peace, she sent the Count St. Julien to Paris, where peace preliminaries were signed on July 28th between

¹ Thibeaudeau's *Consulat*, I., 439-442.

him and Talleyrand. But two days before the news of Marengo reached England a fresh treaty had been made between England and Austria which debarred either ally from a separate peace, and in which a loan of two millions was promised to Austria as a sort of military refresher. (June 20th, 1800). Her efforts, real or simulated, to get England included in a general peace having failed, she refused to ratify the treaty with France, on the ground that St. Julien had exceeded his powers; much to the indignation of Bonaparte, who, with all his later love for war, was sincere in his wish for a pacification. In the attempt made that August and September to include England in the armistice with Austria, both he and Lord Grenville honestly tried to overcome by mutual concessions the difficulties involved in so unprecedented an arrangement as a naval armistice; for, failing a peace, Austria had lost. Hardly had the war recommenced at the beginning of September, than the Austrian Emperor, who had joined his army in person, asked for a prolongation of the armistice; a truce for forty-five days from September 28th was agreed to at Hohenlinden, and another at Castiglione for Italy a few days later. Bonaparte had wished for a general peace, which would have included England; but a fresh offer from him on October 9th, 1800, to negotiate met again with refusal.¹ The verdict of the contemporary English annalist seems a fair one: "It would be unpardonable in an annalist to pass over without due notice and applause the wise and magnanimous conduct of the Chief Consul in being ever ready in the hour of the greatest victory to suspend the career of war, and come to terms of peace."²

After the failure to relieve Genoa an expedition was sent from England in September to Ferrol in Spain, to capture, if possible, the ships in that harbour, and to take the town and fortresses. A force of 11,000 men did effect a landing, and without resistance occupied the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1801, 18.

² *ib.*, 1800, 210.

heights above the town ; but Sir James Pulteney, finding the place too well defended to justify a surprise attack, re-embarked his troops without effecting anything, much to the wrath of the naval forces, which, disappointed of their prey of thirty-four sail of the line, several frigates, and many merchantmen in the harbour, nearly broke into mutiny.¹

These troops, being joined by those from Genoa, then made a similar fruitless expedition against Cadiz, where yellow fever was raging. Lord Keith, in command of a large fleet, and Sir Ralph Abercromby, in command of 20,000 land forces, declined to be deterred by this consideration from their intended attack, but finally surrendered the enterprise as too hazardous: a failure which, added to the previous failures against Quiberon, Belleisle, and Ferrol in that same year, made wider breaches in the Government's popularity than the captures of the little island of Goree off Senegal on April 5th, 1800, or of Curaçoa from the Dutch on September 5th, 1800, and even of Malta from the French after a two years' siege, on the same day, were able to repair.

But the tide was flowing strongly against the Coalition. Apprehension of a British force landing on the Tuscan coast, if the war were renewed after the armistice, made the French desirous of a pretext for occupying Tuscany, and this was provided by a rising in the district of Ferrara, still held by the Austrians in spite of the treaty of Alexandria. The French occupied Florence on October 15th, and seizing Leghorn confiscated all the English property they could find there, and the English vessels and cargoes in the harbour. The English fleet that appeared before the fort a few days later, with 12,000 troops on board, justified to the French their precautionary policy.² Switzerland also was finally subjugated.

Hostilities, resumed between the French and Austrians after the armistice, quickly resulted in Moreau's great

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXV., 980.

² Ann. Reg., 1801, 63, 4.

victory at Hohenlinden on December 3rd, 1800. Bonaparte, says Bourrienne, his secretary, danced for joy on hearing the news. Moreau continued his victorious career; Salzburg was taken, and such again became the danger to Vienna that the Imperial family prepared for flight. The pictures from the gallery were packed ready for removal, when on December 27th, 1800, arrived the Archduke Charles, with the welcome news that the armistice he had found himself obliged to solicit at Steyer had been concluded for thirty days from December 25th. The French were able to claim that within twenty days they had taken 25,000 prisoners; killed or wounded between 12,000 and 15,000; and come within striking distance of Vienna itself. Moreau's fame began to rival Bonaparte's, but French generals had always the fear of the Bourbons before their eyes, and Moreau (*La Mariée*), seduced in later years by Royalist allurements and involved in the great Royalist plot of 1804, ended his career at Leipzig in 1813, fighting in the Russian service against his country. Whilst Moreau thus drove the Austrians before him in Germany, General Brune did the same in Italy, till within twenty miles of Venice on January 16th, 1801, the armistice at Treviso marked still further the utter collapse of Austria, to whose destruction our counsels had so much contributed.

Thus Pitt's war policy had failed dismally; the renewed Coalition had crumbled almost to nothing. And what added to the gloom of the exit of the passing century was the internal condition of the country. Wheat, which in the year the war began was at 48 shillings the quarter, had risen to 112.¹ Pitt ascribed this to the bad harvest, not to the war; but whatever the cause, the war, which had made the wealthy wealthier, had reduced the poorer classes to beggary, and almost to starvation.² Famine raged in the land at the end of 1800, and the starvation with which we had threatened

¹ Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 167.

² Parl. Hist., XXXIV., 1224.

France in 1793 was being turned against us by all the Powers of Europe.¹ The poor rate had risen in parts of Yorkshire from £522 to £6,000.² Over the country generally they had increased by five millions.³ Agricultural wages fell to the low level of eight or nine shillings a week, whilst the prices of all foods rose enormously. The general misery expressed itself in riots and in the seizing of corn by mobs. The general distress reached the higher social strata; "there never was a time when the higher ranks of society were reduced to such privations."⁴ It became necessary to do something. To economise bread, none might be sold within twenty-four hours of baking, and this reduced consumption in London by one-sixth. It was advised to show charity to the poor, not in bread or flour, or money, but in rice and soups; substitutes for bread were recommended; and, as advised by the Archbishop of Canterbury, many peers and commoners signed an agreement to allow their afflicted families only a low maximum of bread per week and to forbid them pastry in any form.

Pitt wrote to Addington on October 8th, 1800: "the question of peace or war is not in itself half so formidable as that of the scarcity with which it is necessarily combined, and for the evils and growing danger of which I see no adequate remedy,"⁵ but for this side of the war few seemed to care so long as the other side of the shield showed a brighter aspect; so long as commerce and the moneyed interests revelled in the gains which the war brought them. "Contractors and loan-mongers," said one speaker, "are the only persons who have not been impoverished by the war."⁶ Bonaparte, according to Bourrienne, often called contractors a curse and leprosy upon nations, nor would he ever grant them honours; he regarded contractors and rogues as synonymous terms; as Moreau found them to his cost at Toulon. Wars are

¹ *ib.*, XXXV., 709.² *ib.*, XXXV., 1064.³ *ib.*, XXXV., 701.⁴ *ib.*, XXXV., 932. ⁵ Pellew's Sidmouth, I., 263. ⁶ *ib.*, XXXV., 699.

unimaginable without contractors, who in the last analysis probably do more to cause and sustain them than ambitious kings or incapable diplomats.

But there was another class besides contractors that was not impoverished by the war ; for, whilst nine shillings a week represented the labourer's living wage, Lord Warwick declared that the farmers round him were making profits of 200 per cent. ; that they were rich enough to play whist at guinea points, and to mix brandy with their wine.¹ They sold barley at twenty shillings a bushel, when ten would have paid them well, and Lord Warwick got a sound scolding from Lord Grenville for suggesting that a legal maximum of ten should be fixed.

With Austria hopelessly beaten, and only Portugal, Naples, and Turkey left to us as allies, it was a serious thing that the neutral Powers were now turning against us. The war party had made the liberties of Europe their pretext for the war, and in the name of those very liberties Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Prussia were rapidly drifting to open war with us.

Russia was passing from alliance to enmity. She had so far quarrelled with Germany as to refuse to receive a German ambassador (October 15th, 1800), nor had she forgiven us for the disastrous campaign to which we had committed her against Holland in 1799. The "magnanimity" of Paul, on which Pitt had built such hopes of a solid alliance, was turning to malignity ; though one unfortunate Englishman had actually been fined and imprisoned for expressing doubts of Paul's sincerity.²

Yet a more judicious exercise of our maritime rights by our Admiralty might have averted the trouble. Denmark was the chief sufferer from our too rigorous policy towards neutrals. Many of her ships, found afterwards to be free of contraband, were brought into our

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXV., 833, 4.

² Parl. Hist., XXXV., 652.

ports,¹ and in December, 1799, she offered armed resistance to a demand to search some ships under convoy. The right to search merchantmen under convoy of a ship of war was one we had never surrendered, though several treaties rendered such ships immune between the Baltic Powers and with the United States. Persistence in enforcing the right was not justified by necessity; and when in July, 1800, the Danish frigate, the *Freya*, and her convoy were brought into the Downs after an engagement that had resulted in the deaths of two Danes and five Englishmen, Paul I. took strongly the Danish side. Lord Whitworth, sent with an armed squadron as negotiator, succeeded in effecting a compromise which deferred till a later date the settlement of the disputed right, but Paul was so incensed at his passing the Sound, to the danger of Russian trade in the Baltic, that he placed an embargo on all British property in Russia; prepared on September 10th to raise an army for a possible rupture; and started active preparations for a naval war. The embargo was taken off on September 22nd, when the Anglo-Danish dispute had been settled.

But the settlement was only temporary. At the end of October, Paul announced his intention of reviving the Armed Neutrality of 1780. And the question of Malta increased the friction. Paul, as Grand Master of the Order of St. John, had been led to think that Malta, when taken from the French, would become his, and in August, 1800, he sent the Russian fleet from the Black Sea to take possession of the island when that happened. When Malta was taken, and the English took possession, he protested strongly, and proceeded again to put an embargo on English ships in all his ports till his rights were satisfied.² As many as 300 British ships were thus seized, and their crews and captains marched off as prisoners into Russia: an outrage that was virtually a declaration of war.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1801, 92.

² November 18th and 23rd. Ann. Reg., 1800, II., 253.

Prussia, too, was drawn into the list of our fresh enemies. In October, 1800, a Prussian vessel, laden with naval stores for Holland, was taken by an English frigate into Cuxhaven, a port of Hamburg. King Frederick William sent 2,000 troops to occupy Cuxhaven, nor could the politest remonstrances from Lord Carysfort, our ambassador, induce him to remove them, though he still professed his strong friendship for George III. And Denmark was naturally drawn into the orbit of Prussia.

On December 15th, 1800, Russia and Sweden signed their Convention, ratified shortly afterwards, of the Armed Neutrality,¹ and within a few weeks both Denmark and Prussia acceded to it. On the British demand for explanations Denmark openly avowed her adhesion to the Northern Confederacy on December 31st, 1800.

The Convention itself followed the lines of the Convention of September 30th, 1800, between France and the United States.² It defined contraband, excluding naval stores; permitted neutrals to trade on belligerent coasts; insisted on only an effective blockade making ships capturable; and, above all, made enemy property, save contraband, exempt from capture under the neutral flag. In the event of their ships being insulted, plundered or captured in violation of these principles by any ship of war or privateer, the contracting Powers agreed to support one another, failing redress on remonstrance, in reprisals against the offending State.

That free ships made free goods and that a blockade to be operative must be effective were principles admitted into the maritime law of most nations by the Treaty of Paris in 1856, but Pitt said that the principles of the Baltic Powers "imperiously called on Englishmen to resist them to the last shilling and the last drop of blood,"³ and Nelson held that the principle of "free ships, free goods," was so "monstrous in itself" that had not

¹ Ann. Reg., 1800, II., 260-4.

² *ib.*, 1800, II., 282-290.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXV., 1128.

Russia yielded the point by the treaty of June 14th, 1801, "we ought not to have concluded the war while a single man, a single shilling, or even a single drop of blood remained in the country."¹ And the King, whose mind was generally fixed upon most subjects, wrote that there was nothing on which it was more fixed than on this one.² So great are often the errors of even the greatest minds.

Bonaparte cleverly turned to his own advantage this estrangement between England and Russia. An embassy from Russia reached Paris on December 18th, 1800, to treat for an exchange of prisoners. Seven thousand Russian prisoners had been taken in the Dutch adventure, and England had refused to exchange them for an equal number of French prisoners; Bonaparte ordered all these 7,000 to be sent back to Russia without exchange or condition of any sort, clothed in new uniforms, and with their arms and lost standards restored; a gracious act, which converted Paul I. into Bonaparte's most devoted friend. Thus, with Bonaparte's support and encouragement, the Northern Confederacy raised fresh and just alarm in England; for though navally weak individually, Russia, Sweden and Denmark might soon have a collective naval force of 100 ships of the line: a force which might possibly suffice to raise our blockade of the French ports and so enable a French fleet to operate again in the Channel.

¹ *ib.*, XXXVI., 262.

² Pellew's Sidmouth, I., 365.

CHAPTER X

1801. The Belated Peace of Amiens

THE new century, coinciding with the first meeting of the United Parliament, thus began under the blackest clouds, with a new war added to the old one ; and with nothing less likely than an all-round pacification in Europe.

The peace of Lunéville, between France on the one hand and Austria and the German Empire on the other, signed on February 9th, 1801, was a stunning blow to Pitt's policy and hopes. Despite the stipulation against a separate peace in our treaty of the preceding year, our consent to release our ally, brought to her knees by our encouragement to further warfare, was unavoidable. And considering how much the recent French victories over Austria had added to French power, the moderation in the terms of peace was remarkable ; for they went little beyond those of the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine were definitely ceded by Austria and the Empire to France ; whilst Venice and her territories as far as the Adige were guaranteed to Austria, and the independence guaranteed of the Republics round France, the Batavian, Helvetic, Cisalpine, and Ligurian. So far from France being confined to her old boundaries, as the Allies had intended, her boundaries were extended farther than ever.¹

And to this loss of our chief ally as a motive for peace another motive was supplied from Ireland, which, despite or in consequence of the Union, still afforded a vulnerable point for French attack.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 270-4.

But, necessary as Peace had become, Pitt not only could not make it, but was drifting into a new war. The shame of a peace that fell short of his proud professions of the last eight years could only be avoided by casting upon other shoulders the disgrace of a peace bound to be unpopular. A difference between the Minister and the Monarch on the immediate admission of Catholics to Parliament, sincerely as Pitt desired their admission, supplied him with a good ground for resigning office in the very nick of time. In February Pitt resigned, and Speaker Addington was chosen in his place: Pitt being followed by the whole of the war crew, Dundas, Windham, Canning, Lord Grenville and Lord Spencer, who, under his captaincy, had succeeded in running the ship of State well nigh on to the rocks.

But it was not till March 13th that Addington took over the seals of office, and meantime the dispute with Pitt had thrown the King into a violent illness. Addington from the first stood for peace. When Lord Malmesbury complained to the Duke of York that Addington was meditating peace, the Duke said that it would have the worst effect on his father should he learn on his recovery that such a thing had been agitated.¹ "The Lion," Malmesbury, thought peace "an unwise and weak measure," and was much incensed, as was also Canning, by the help that Pitt gave to Addington in the matter, Canning complaining that Pitt had always been too pacific.

Shortly after the ratification of the Treaty of Lunéville Mr. Merry "was sent to Paris as an agent on the part of the British Ministry,"² and on March 21st, 1801, the British Government began overtures with M. Otto, who, since 1799, nominally as superintendent for the exchange of prisoners, had been kept by Bonaparte in England for negotiating a peace.³ Still it is not quite clear to which Power belongs the honour, or the shame, of

¹ Diaries, IV., 29.

² Ann. Reg., 1801, 275.

³ Pellew's Sidmouth, I., 477; Alison, IV., 623.

having opened negotiations. Not only was the most profound secrecy to be observed, but there was to be no suspension of arms. Whilst war generally begins with all publicity, with the cheering of crowds, the firing of cannon, and the pealing of bells, shame-faced peace must sneak back to the world by hidden ways and under ridiculous disguises. And in this case so successful was the secrecy that, when the preliminaries were tardily signed on October 1st, 1801, they came on the world with a shock of surprise ; nor is it credible that without such secrecy peace could have ever been made, in the face of a Jingo public long deluded by a Jingo Press.

But meantime there was no relaxation of the war. Pitt replied on January 14th, 1801, to the Russian embargo by laying a similar embargo, not only on Russian ships in our ports, but on Swedish and Danish ships as well. Sweden fairly complained of this as outrageous, as neither she nor Denmark were concerned in the dispute between England and Russia about Malta.¹ Privateers also were given free play, and of 450 Swedish vessels then abroad, as many as 200 were captured at sea or detained in port. On February 27th Denmark declared herself a principal contracting party in the Petersburg Convention.

Bonaparte showed his diplomatic skill in attaching Prussia to this Northern League. In vain Lord Carysfort solicited the continued friendship of Prussia ; Haugwitz in his reply of February 12th expressed Prussia's " utmost grief " at the violent and hasty measures of England ; complained of her usurpation of the seas ; avowed Prussia's adhesion to the Petersburg Convention, and refused all friendship whilst the embargo remained in force.² Soon afterwards, on March 30th, 1801, the Prussian King declared his intention of closing against British ships the mouths of the Elbe, the Weser, and the Ems, and of occupying George III.'s Hanoverian domin-

¹ Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 237-7, 244.

² *ib.*, 1801, II., 239.

ions.¹ Hanover was accordingly occupied, and an embargo placed on British shipping, as it had been previously in the ports of Sweden and Denmark. The English annalist declared that "never was war carried on by any Power with greater dignity, civility and decorum" than it was by Prussia.² By making peace with Naples on March 28th, 1801, of which one of the conditions was the shutting of her ports against British shipping, Bonaparte had succeeded in closing nearly all the Continent against British trade.

Nor was the gravity of this situation much affected by such naval successes as Admiral Duckworth achieved in the Windward Islands, by which, during March and April, the Swedish island of St. Bartholomew, the Dutch island of St. Martin, the Danish Islands of St. Thomas and St. John, and the islands of St. Eustatius and Saba submitted to the British flag. Spain, too, was induced on February 27th to declare war on Portugal, for whose protection we could do nothing, in the absence of our Expeditionary Force against the French in Egypt; and Paul and Bonaparte had concocted a detailed plan of campaign, by which 35,000 Russians and as many French were to march within 120 days against our empire in India.³

But at this point the goddess of Fortune, on whom he so much relied, deserted Bonaparte, as she had when Kléber had been assassinated in Egypt on June 14th, 1800. The midnight murder of Paul I. on March 23rd, 1801, put an end to all these dreams of conquest, and the strong anti-French reaction that set in with his son, Alexander I., who on April 7th released the English captives and removed the embargo on corn, soon broke up the Northern Confederacy. But not before the desperate battle at Copenhagen on April 2nd, when the British fleet under Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson had caused Christian VII.

¹ *ib.*, II., 250

² *ib.*, 1801, 107.

³ Rambaud's *Russie*, 524.

of Denmark to pay dearly for his part in what was considered a conspiracy against the maritime rights of Great Britain. In the settlement of this quarrel both Lord Nelson and Addington's Cabinet showed a conciliatory disposition, and the Convention of June 14th, 1801, with Russia, acceded to by Denmark on October 23rd, 1801, and by Sweden on March 30th, 1802, brought the needless strife to an end. But that much was ceded for which the Baltic Powers had fought was proved by Lord Grenville's bitter attack against the Convention. The neutral flag was in future to protect merchandise of enemy growth or manufacture purchased by neutrals; privateers lost the right of searching ships under convoy; contraband was restricted to certain specified articles; blockade to be recognised must be effective; and the trial of neutral ships was to be uniform and prompt.¹ These, though falling short of the freedom of the seas for which Russia had fought, were great concessions, and a great modification of Pitt's declaration that such concessions must be resisted to our last man and our last shilling. The grievance of neutrals was no less felt by the United States, to whose complaint of our claim to capture neutral merchandise on March 13th, 1801, Lord Hawkesbury had to yield.² So that, if Paul was rightly counted mad, it was not in regard to a naval policy in which most of the world participated.

But was his madness more than a political fiction? Alison adduces singular evidence of his insanity: the report in the *Petersburg Gazette* of December 30th, 1800, that he conceived the idea, for the speedier ending of a war otherwise interminable, that himself and other belligerent Monarchs should meet in single combat, with their several Ministers; Pitt, Thugut, and the rest, serving as their squires and heralds. Seldom, surely, did a brighter thought illumine a human brain!

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI, 18-25.

² Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 263-5.

3 IV., 541.

The murder of Paul caused as much rejoicing in England as in St. Petersburg, and corresponding lamentation in France. Bonaparte left it to history to unveil the connection he suspected between the murder of the Czar on March 23rd and the passing of the Sound by the British fleet on March 30th.¹ This suspicion has generally been attributed to Napoleonic malice ; as by Prof. Morfill, who wrote : " Napoleon vainly endeavoured to insinuate that this crime was committed at the instigation of the English."² But his History was published in 1902, probably before he had read Prof. Schiemann's *Ermordung Paul's* (the Murder of Paul), published at Berlin the same year. This book quoted in full two contemporary testimonies previously unknown. One was by Prince Lobanow-Rostowski, distinguished both as a general and a diplomat, who in the latter capacity had served in Vienna, Berlin and London, and was at one time Foreign Secretary at St. Petersburg. He availed himself of these positions to discover what he could from Russian and foreign archives and from the best living sources relating to Paul I. Another contemporary writing published was by Senator Sernow, also resident in St. Petersburg at the time and holding an office in the Russian Home Office.

The Prince's story is that the real originators of the conspiracy, not originally for the murder, but only for the dethronement of Paul, were Sir Charles Whitworth, the English ambassador, Count Nikita Panin and Admiral Ribas ; Alexander, then in his eighteenth year, being in the secret from the first. The plot was formed at the end of 1799 : Paul was to be declared insane and to be dethroned in favour of his eldest son Alexander. Paul had made Panin his Vice-Chancellor in September, 1799, and as all correspondence between the Czar and foreign ambassadors had to pass through the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Charles Whitworth and Panin were thrown obviously

¹ Alison, IV., 539.

² Hist. of Russia, 272.

into close political relations, intimate as their relations may have been before that date. Whitworth had represented us in Russia since 1788, and out of gratitude to him for having carried through the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1798 Paul had pressed the British Government to reward him with a peerage, and thus on March 21st, 1800, Sir Charles became Lord Whitworth. But when friction soon afterwards occurred with England Paul demanded Whitworth's recall, and on May 27th, 1800, he left Russia. Any part, therefore, that Whitworth played in the conspiracy must have been before that date. And it seems that the conspiracy slumbered throughout the year 1800, though after Panin, owing to a quarrel with Paul, had been dismissed from his office on November 15th, 1800, it was carried on with so little concealment that it even reached the ears of Paul himself.

Sernow's account, which gives the fullest details of this ghastly tragedy, agrees with the former in so far as it connects Whitworth with the origin of the conspiracy. Sernow says that Whitworth and Olga Sherebzow, sister of the Subow brothers, consulted Panin, who had been banished to his country estates, through Count Ribas. But the dates disprove some of this story. Panin was banished to his estates on December 15th, 1800; Ribas died on December 2nd, 1800, and Whitworth had left Russia on May 27th, 1800. But the chief difference in the two accounts is in the addition of the lady to the number of the original conspirators. Anything more atrocious than Panin's share in the murder of his master, with whom he had been educated in his boyhood, it would be difficult to conceive. Alexander remained a consenting party to the plot, only stipulating that his father should not be killed; but when Paul had been killed he immediately recalled Panin as Vice-Chancellor! When his mother, Paul's widow, refused to let Panin kiss her hand till he had given his word of honour that he had had no hand in the late revolution, Panin tried to prove his innocence by

referring to his absence from St. Petersburg at the time. Alexander was unable to keep her in error, and a letter he showed her from Panin to Whitworth to convince her of his complicity put Panin beyond the bounds of her forgiveness for the rest of his life. Alexander therefore banished him in October, 1801, and when he recalled him in 1804, and his mother said that he must choose between herself and his friend, he again banished him, and this time for the rest of his reign.

But others shared with Panin in blood-guiltiness. The worst perhaps of all was Von Pahlen, who used his position as Military Governor of the capital to further the plot, though careful to play so double a part between Paul and his enemies as to be on the right side whichever party might prevail. General Benningsen, so conspicuous in Russia's later wars with France, was among the principal conspirators; when the plotters had reached the Czar's sleeping-room, and some began to make proposals of his resignation, Benningsen cried out: "Have we come here to talk?" whereupon Nicolai Subow, the brother of Lord Whitworth's friend Olga, struck the kneeling Czar on the left temple with a golden snuff-box, and the other distinguished murderers did the rest.¹ But Alexander escaped the crime of parricide, though consenting to a plot, which, according to Russian precedent, could hardly have ended otherwise than by his father's death; yet this was the young man who a few years later, in 1804, was so morally shocked by the execution of the Duc d'Enghien that he ordered his whole court into mourning.

This account differs slightly from the story given by Prince Czartoryski, who derived some of his details from Benningsen himself. According to this story Benningsen only heard of the conspiracy for the first time on the evening of the murder and then placed himself at the head of the band; he told Paul to consider himself his

¹ Schiemann, 30.

prisoner and to sign an act of abdication ; but he had just left the room when the assassination took place.¹

But the point of chief interest is not so much Benning-sen's part in the conspiracy as Lord Whitworth's. For if these Russian stories are true, he must have been among the few original conspirators for Paul's dethronement, and in that case the notion that an ambassador takes no part in the politics of the country to which he is accredited must go the way of other popular delusions.

Paul's death was doubly unfortunate for Bonaparte ; for, by releasing Turkey from the Russian menace, it set her free to assist, or at least not to hinder, the British expedition against the French in Egypt. Early in March Sir Ralph Abercromby landed his force of over 17,000 men, and after a series of brilliant victories over the French, bought dearly by the death of Abercromby himself, Cairo was compelled to capitulate on June 22nd, and Alexandria on August 27th. The result was the same that would have been achieved a year sooner by the treaty of El-Arish ; the French, some 24,000, were forced to return to France, with their arms, baggage and artillery. It was the greatest triumph Great Britain had achieved in the war, and it smoothed the way for the near but unsuspected peace.

Meantime since September, 1800, great camps, of which the principal one was at Boulogne, had been in formation for the threatened invasion of England ; and the peace with Austria relieved very large French forces for an object which, according to his secretary, Bourrienne, Bonaparte never intended. Nor was invasion a feasible chance against our superior naval force, which the course of the war had so greatly increased. Since the war began only three of our ships of the line had been captured, and of those one had been retaken ; at the outside we had lost two frigates, and most of our smaller captured vessels had been retaken. On the other hand, France had lost

¹ Memoirs, I., 228-255.

78 ships of the line, 483 war vessels in all, *plus* 743 privateers; the Dutch had lost 15 war ships, and the Spaniards 76; altogether a grand total of 1,317 vessels.¹

Besides the flotilla under Nelson which, with the Channel fleet, guarded the coasts, we were able to keep fleets in the West Indies, in the Indian Ocean, at the mouth of the Nile, two fleets in the Mediterranean, and a small one in the Baltic. If the invasion of France was impossible from our side, much more was our invasion impossible from the ports of France and Holland, in the face of the ships of war which guarded the whole extent of our coasts. The failure of Nelson that August to attack successfully the flotilla at Boulogne signified that at sea neither side could injure the other. The deadlock thus reached was a strong stimulant to the desire for peace, and flags of truce were daily passing through the hostile armaments between Dover and Calais.

Portugal, too, lay at the mercy of France. After her half-hearted war with Spain had been ended by the treaty of Badajoz on June 6th, she had been obliged to close her ports against us. Bonaparte, refusing to ratify a treaty otherwise objectionable to him, sent a French army, which a subsidy from us of £900,000 did not help Portugal to resist, when it was men rather than money that she needed. A treaty, therefore had to be concluded at Madrid on September 29th, two days before the pacification with England and her allies. Consequently the renewed exclusion of all British vessels from her ports amounted to little more than a fresh menace to England; and such a disadvantage from the loss of the Portuguese alliance was not the least of the British motives for desiring peace.²

When it was announced on October 2nd, 1801, that preliminaries of peace had been signed the day before

¹ Dundas, March 25th, 1801; Parl. Hist., XXXV., 1086. But cf. Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 182.

² Ann. Reg., 1801, II., 293-5.

between England and France and their respective allies, the joy manifested both in Paris and London came near to frenzy ; in London there had been nothing like it since the restoration of Charles II. ; it was specially manifested on October 10th, when Bonaparte's aide-de-camp, Lauriston, arrived with the ratifications, and the populace, releasing the horses, drew his carriage themselves through the main streets of the town ; for which honour Lauriston rewarded them with a gift of ten guineas for drink. On two successive nights the metropolis was illuminated, and at the magnificent Guildhall banquet on Lord Mayor's day, the loudest cheers, on his entry into the hall, was for Citizen Otto, whose tact and good sense had, with Lord Hawkesbury's, turned the French and English nations from enemies to friends.

But the French emigrants in London looked on the peace as the end of all their hopes ; and the peace was equally hated by the English war party, which had sustained and shared their hopes of a Bourbon restoration. Their anger was extreme, as expressed in such papers as the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Courier*, the *Star*, the *St. James' Chronicle* and the *Porcupine* (Cobbett's paper), in opposition to the *Times*, the *Herald*, the *Sun* and the *True Briton*.¹ Lord Malmesbury wrote of the "childish exultation and joy" of the people ; Windham wrote angrily of the joy of "the swinish multitude."² He wrote to Addington on October 1st : "I must not omit to thank you for your note, however dreadful the intelligence which it contains" (*i.e.*, the peace preliminaries) ; he had no idea how any recovery was possible, and thought it the death blow of the country.³ On October 17th, 1801, he wrote to his nephew : "We are all going fast down the gulf stream and shall never stop, I fear, till with the rest of Europe we fall under the

¹ Windham, Papers, II., 174.

² Papers, II., 175.

³ *ib.*, II., 172, 3.

universal empire of the great Republic."¹ On October 29th he declared in Parliament "with the solemnity of a death-bed declaration," that his friends who had signed the treaty had signed the death warrant of their country.²

But the grief was even greater in higher quarters, if Cobbett's account to Windham on October 20th, 1801, be true: "The King upon reading the preliminaries, lifted his hands and eyes to Heaven, and after remaining in that attitude for some minutes dropped his hands on the paper with a heavy sigh, since which he has not spoken to any living soul about the peace. The Duke of Kent and the Prince, and all the younger princes are shocked at the terms of this abominable peace, and with you are fully persuaded that the country and the monarchy is exposed to great and almost imminent danger."³ But whose fault was it that the peace did not give more satisfaction? Whose but the King's and his Ministers', who, when they might have made a better peace in January, 1800, had scorned the offer, and paid the price of their fear of a premature peace by a belated and insecure one?

The main idea of the peace was the restoration to France of our conquests in return for her evacuation of Egypt and its restoration to Turkey. But news of the capitulation of Alexandria and of the evacuation of Egypt did not reach London till the day after the preliminaries were signed. Nor did the Turkish ambassador at Paris know of it till October 10th, the day after he had signed a peace treaty with France, of which the restoration of Egypt was treated as a voluntary restitution,⁴ and by which France was admitted to the commercial privileges of the most favoured nation, whilst England derived no return for the enormous sacri-

¹ Diary, 436.

² Papers, II., 178; Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 14.

³ *ib.*, II., 176.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1801, 280.

fices she had made for the Porte. The diplomatic honours of the year rested assuredly with Bonaparte and Talleyrand.¹

But for some time the peace was far from safe. To convert the preliminaries into a definitive treaty lasted from October, 1801, till March 27th, 1802. Lord Cornwallis, no diplomat by training, was perhaps hardly a match for Joseph Bonaparte; and it often looked as if the peace might fail. Especially about Malta, which people had come to talk of as a stepping-stone to Egypt, and so as the key to India; and which, owing to our disclaimer at the beginning of our blockade, we could not claim for our own possession. By the preliminaries Malta was to be evacuated by the British and restored to the Order of St. John of Jerusalem; whilst, to make it independent of either France or England, it was to be placed under the guarantee of a third Power, to be agreed on by the definitive treaty. The First Consul, objecting to Russia as this third Power as too strong, and to Naples as too weak, proposed the demolition of the fortifications as the best solution (November 26th and 28th, 1801), and this was repeated on December 13th, by his brother Joseph: "As the only value of Malta is the extraordinary strength of its fortifications, let us blow up the work, and there will be an end of all jealousy on the subject." This excellent plan was proposed repeatedly and Cornwallis himself inclined to it, but unfortunately the King's opposition proved fatal.²

The alternative plan proved in the result as unworkable as it seemed to Lord Cornwallis eccentric. By Article 10 of the definitive treaty and its thirteen explanatory clauses, Malta and its dependent islands were declared to be perpetually neutral, like the Order to which they were to be restored. Their independence was placed under the guarantee and protection, not of Russia only, but of France, Austria, Prussia, Great Britain and Spain. The

¹ Alison, IV., 630.

² Pellew's "Sidmouth," II., 13-15.

Maltese ports were to be free to all nations at equal and moderate duties. And subject to some complicated provisions about the election of a Grand-Master, and to the previous arrival of a garrison of 2,000 Sicilians, the islands were to be evacuated by the British within three months of the ratification of the treaty.

In other respects the Definitive treaty differed little from the Preliminary treaty, and was received with no less furious and frivolous abuse. The usual epithets were hurled against the unfortunate peace. Windham, the great defender of bull-baiting, feared for the havoc that the peace was likely to make on our principles and morals. But even those who had fought for peace from the outset did not hail it with enthusiasm. Grey, for instance, called it "by far the most dangerous" peace we had ever made.¹ But Sheridan best expressed the common sense of the matter: it was a peace "which every man ought to be glad of but no man proud;" it involved a degradation of the national dignity, which no truly English heart could feel with indifference; but then the war was one of the worst in which we had ever been engaged, and the peace was as good as was possible in the circumstances.² And the best defence of it that Lord Hawkesbury could make, was the same that Pelham had made of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, that, though the arrangement was not the best conceivable, it was "as good as circumstances would permit."

It was certainly disappointing, considering the wild hopes that had been held out to the country and the crushing taxation which the war had caused.

The Government, often challenged to state its war aims, had from time to time given different answers. Generally the answer was the phrase "indemnity for the past, security for the future."³ "Our simple object," said Pitt, on June 17th, 1799, "is security, just security,

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 628.

² *ib.*, XXXVI., 17.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXI., 633, XXXIII., 596.

with a little indemnification thrown in.”¹ And again on February 17th, 1800, he put it as “security against a danger, the greatest that ever threatened the world.”² But it was precisely security that the peace did not give, and wherein lay the indemnification? Sometimes it was said that the object of the war was the liberation of Belgium from France; the war, said Grenville, on March 27th, 1797, was fought, not for this or that province; “it was whether the French should possess the whole of the maritime coast of the Continent opposite to this country”³: a reasonable enough object, but Belgium remained French.

Canning had proclaimed the deliverance of Europe as the great purpose of the war; yet Austria had been laid prostrate at the feet of France, to say nothing of the other countries that were subject to her yoke. Again, the destruction of Jacobinism was professed as the object of the war; but it was the Consulate’s administration, not our arms, which had destroyed Jacobinism. So that from every point of view urged in defence of the war by its partisans the war had been a great failure, notwithstanding the brilliant naval successes that outshone no small number of naval disasters. The last of these occurred on September 14th, 1801, when an attempt by Admiral Warren to relieve Porto-Ferrajo, besieged by the French, and to reduce the whole island of Elba, resulted in 800 English being killed or wounded, and in 200 being made prisoners.⁴

But our navy had brought immense accessions to the British Empire; for a superior naval Power always holds at its mercy the colonies of a navally inferior enemy. To take possession of the French Colonies, and subsequently of those of Holland and Spain, had from the first been the main object of our strategy; nor would anyone listen to Lord Lansdowne, who, as early as

¹ *ib.*, XXXIV., 1047.

² *ib.*, XXXIV., 1442.

³ *ib.*, XXXIII., 193.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1801, 71, 2.

February 1st, 1793, had predicted that we should ultimately have to restore these captures as an equivalent for the losses of our allies on the Continent.¹ Yet this was just what happened.

To France, Holland, or Spain, we restored : in the West Indies, Martinique, Tobago, Guadaloupe, part of St. Domingo, and Curaçoa ; in the East Indies, Pondichery, Cochin, Negapatam, the Spice Islands ; in Africa, the Cape, Goree, and Senegal ; in North America, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and (by a secret treaty) Louisiana ; in South America, Demerara, Berbice, Essiquibo and Guiana, as far as the Amazons ; in the Mediterranean, we were to give up Malta and Minorca. All these were to be restored within different periods ; and all that we kept was Ceylon from Holland and Trinidad from Spain, whilst the Newfoundland fisheries were restored to their pre-war settlement. So was the Ottoman Empire. The French evacuated the territories of Naples and of Rome, whilst we evacuated Porto Ferrajo and all the ports and islands we held in the Mediterranean and the Adriatic.

It had been hotly debated in Parliament whether the war had been a success or a failure. Dundas had proclaimed it an " unexampled success " by reason of the very conquests we now surrendered. Windham had argued its success from our still having a British Parliament where British legislators might sit. And the best that Pitt could say for it was that it had not cost us a single foot of territory. But it was undeniable that a better peace might have been made at Lille in 1797, to the saving of 150 millions of debt ; or in 1800, to the saving of the 73 millions which the continuance of the war entailed. Fox on March 25th, 1801, fairly tested the war by its professed objects. Had we restored monarchy to France ? Had we reduced her power ? She was aggrandised beyond the wildest dreams of former ambition ; whilst, so far from having been driven within her ancient

¹ Parl. Hist., XXX., 331.

frontiers, she had enlarged herself from the Rhine to the Alps, and added five millions to her population in the centre of Europe. "Tell me one single object of the war that you have obtained; tell me one evil that you have not brought upon the country."¹

And did some such reflections never occur to George III. himself, who from the first had been, not only the leading war spirit of the nation, but also, as the Dropmore Papers show, of predominant weight in the direction of our military counsels?² When, on perusal of the peace proposals he lifted his royal hands and eyes to Heaven, was it without some sense of his own need of forgiveness for his large personal share in the prolongation of a war that had cost the world so much misery and ended with so little glory?

¹ *ib.*, XXXV., 1147, 8. ² Rose's Pitt and the Great War, 115, 127, 8.

THE SECOND ACT,
1802-1815

CHAPTER I

1802. Fresh War Rumblings

"Those who would tell the truth cannot, or dare not. Thus mankind walks in Darkness."—Sir Robert Wilson, *Diary*, II., 390, June 17th, 1814.

THE mutual Press provocation between England and France did more than anything else to bring about a renewal of the war. It was this that prevented the war atmosphere from cooling down.

Napoleon was often charged with super-sensitiveness to attacks from the Press, and in France he put a strong curb upon its freedom. But other Governments, especially the English, put no curb on its public writers. Our Government gave its support to writers like Jean Peltier, an exiled Royalist *émigré*, who in the first war edited in London a violent anti-republican journal, entitled *Paris*, and whose weekly print *L'Ambigu, or Atrocious and Amusing Varieties*, grossly abusive of Napoleon, was one of the impediments to the signing of the Peace of Amiens. On February 5th, 1802, before the Definitive Treaty was signed, Joseph Bonaparte remonstrated with Lord Cornwallis about this publication, and begged to have Peltier controlled.¹

As a sort of counter-blast to *L'Ambigu*, the French on their side wrote very bitter things against England; an English paper, called *The Argus*, being published in Paris in June, 1802, and being marked by violent abuse of this country, its King, and its Ministers.²

Papers on the same line as Peltier's were Cobbett's *Political Register*, and the *Courier Francois de Londres*, the latter of which was "understood to be to a great

¹ Pellet's Sidmouth, II., 29.

² Ann. Reg., 1803, 237.

degree under the peculiar patronage of his Majesty's Government."¹ Otto remonstrated with Addington about Peltier in May, 1802, at a concert, but the Prime Minister declared the Government to be powerless in the matter, and Lord Hawkesbury, Foreign Minister since February 24th, 1801, took the same line of defence in answer to reiterated requests from France that the annoyance might cease. He expressed the Government's displeasure at a recent article by Peltier, and promised to submit the case to the law officers of the Crown (July 25th, 1802). But this sufficed as little as the plea for the liberty of the press; in vain Hawkesbury argued that the press could not be expected to be more tender to foreign Governments than it was to the Home Government. For to vilify a Foreign Government to an extent that threatened the peace was a punishable libel by the English law; as had been shown in the case of John Perry, proprietor of the *Courier*, who on May 30th, 1799, was sentenced to a fine of £100 and to six months of prison because his paper had said on November 1st, 1798, that our Russian ally, Paul I. of Russia, made himself as obnoxious to his subjects by his tyranny, as he made himself ridiculous to Europe by his inconsistency.² And the Alien Act gave the Government ample power to expel offending foreign writers from the country.

The argument from the liberty of the press, therefore, rang false and shallow. Lord Lansdowne, on March 25th, 1801, had declared in the Lords that the Government had "annihilated the freedom of the press,"³ and, if in the autumn of 1798 John Walter of the *Times* could be sentenced in time of war to a fine of £50, an hour of the pillory (though this was remitted), imprisonment for a year, and security for his good behaviour for seven years, for a censure on the Duke of York, and, for two other libels against the Duke and the Prince of Wales, to another year of prison and a fine of £200, surely in time of peace

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1510.

² State Trials, XXVII., 627-42.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXV., 1065.

the defamation of a foreign ruler, with instigations to his assassination, lay within the power of Government to stop. To such a degree had Pitt's rule been fatal to the liberty of the press that at the close of the eighteenth century there was scarcely a single provincial editor who would venture to write an original article on public affairs,¹ and presumably metropolitan editors enjoyed as limited a freedom.

Moreover, apart from the general principle, the first clause of the Treaty of Amiens bound each side neither to assist, nor protect, directly or indirectly, "those who should cause prejudice" to the other.

Unfortunately Addington, instead of taking a strong line against the Press, preferred to put private pressure on editors; as when he informed Heriot, editor of the *True Briton*, that he could no longer receive the protection of Government if he suffered such paragraphs to appear as the one he described as "abominable" in the issue of August 10th, 1802. But the mischief was done. The *Moniteur* retorted with an article which Mackintosh described as "that most atrocious of all libels against the King and people of England,"² but which Addington regarded as only "the sudden effusion of feelings warrantably irritated."³

Thus the mutual irritation grew worse; though at last the British Government so far admitted the justice of the French complaint as to institute proceedings against Peltier. The day of the trial on February 21st, 1803, was one of great excitement, and if it was memorable for the eloquent, if somewhat sophistical, speech in his defence delivered by Mackintosh, it was no less so for the summing up by Lord Ellenborough, who directed the jury that certain numbers of *L'Ambigu* were a libel, since by their incitement to the assassination of Napoleon they tended to a breach of the peace between England and

¹ Hunt's Fourth Estate, 278.

² State Trials, XXVIII., 576.

³ Pellew's Sidmouth, II., 157.

France. And so the jury found, though the renewal of the war saved Peltier from being called upon to receive judgment.¹ But he seems to have continued to write till the year 1815. As it had been in the days of Walpole, so it was in the days of Pitt, in respect of the Secret Service money that bound some portions of the Press to Government by chains of gold. Arnall, who wrote in the *Free Briton* under the pseudonym of Francis Walsingham, boasted of having received within four years as large a sum as £10,997 6s. 8d. from the Treasury for abusing every one opposed to Walpole; and this sum was part of the larger sum of £50,077 which the secret Committee of Inquiry found that the writers and printers of the *Free Briton*, and other papers, had reaped from Walpole (Lord Orford) in the ten years between February, 1731 and 1741.² And in a country of long surviving habits it is conceivable that similar links between Government and the Press may have descended to our own times.

Never was a war more clearly of press creation: the invectives of each country against the other becoming more bitter as diplomatic negotiations became more difficult.

Neither country lacked just grievances against the other. Bonaparte reasonably objected to this country being used as a base for Royalist intrigues against his Government, and to French exiled princes and others appearing at the British Court in the insignia of the abolished French orders. He had little reason to love the Royalist party, which, after the decree of November 26th, 1800, permitting the return to France of the greater number of the *émigrés*, was proved on January 31st, 1801, to have been guilty of the attempt to blow him up on his way to the opera on December 24th, 1800. It was accordingly solicited by the French Government that certain French royalists and bishops should be sent out of England and Jersey; and recommended that

¹ State Trials, XXVIII., 530-620.

² Andrew's British Journalism, II., 137, 8.

the French princes should go to Warsaw, and emigrants be removed who wished to continue to wear the ancient orders (August 17th, 1802).

Hawkesbury's answer was couched in conciliatory terms as regarded some of these requests. His Majesty would expel the bishops on proof shown of their intrigues against France ; he was contemplating measures for the removal of the Vendean chief Georges and similar royalist conspirators ; but to expel the Bourbon princes and the few wearers of extinct orders could as little consist with his honour as it did with his resolution to concede nothing of the liberty of the press to foreign menace. (August 28th, 1802).

These side issues did not make it easier to settle the territorial disputes, of which the main one regarded Malta. The British evacuation of this island, a " miserable rock," as Talleyrand called it, within three months of the ratification of the treaty, was so hedged round with conditions that pretexts for our remaining there were not wanting, though the peace began with no such intention. At the same time the Cape was not given back to the Dutch within the specified term, nor Egypt to the Porte. It is an extraordinary thing that so late as November 30th, 1802, Lord Hawkesbury learnt with surprise that General Stuart, in default of a royal warrant to evacuate Egypt, had remained there with 4,000 men ; nor were direct orders given to him to leave Egypt, in compliance with the request of General Andréossi, the French Ambassador.

On the other hand we fairly complained of the continuance of French troops in Holland as contrary to treaties ; of the annexation of Piedmont to France on September 11th, 1802, though sanctioned by Austria, Russia and Prussia. But it was French intervention in Swiss affairs that caused us most irritation. The eleventh article of the Treaty of Lunéville mutually pledged Austria and France to guarantee the independence of the Helvetic Republic, and to acquiesce in any form of Government which it

preferred. But we were no parties to that treaty, nor more concerned with its infraction than with that of any other treaty between two independent Powers; it was for Austria to remonstrate or to go to war for Switzerland, not for us, when French action interposed to stop the civil war that had raged in that country between July and October, 1802. Our remonstrance at Paris on October 10th had no effect beyond irritating Bonaparte. But our sending orders on October 17th to their respective Governors to delay the restitution of the Cape and other Dutch and French Colonies, as agreed by the Treaty of Amiens, was altogether unjustified by the French occupation of Switzerland. On the insurrection in Switzerland being thus ended, counter-orders were sent on November 15th against the detention of the Colonies.¹ But though Pondicherry in the East, and Martinique, Tobago, and St. Lucia in the west, were thus restored to the French, the Cape was excepted from the colonies restored to the Dutch. Most of the English garrison was embarked for removal from the Cape when the orders to remain arrived,² and the relanding of the troops, pending the arrival of the counter-orders of November 15th, was in direct violation of the treaty.

It was argued in England, nor was it denied in France, that the French occupation of Switzerland; the conversion of the Cisalpine into the Italian Republic; the French occupation of the Duchies of Parma and Placentia and of Elba; made such an accession to French power since the treaty as to give us a just claim to compensation. But Bonaparte was obdurate against Malta providing such compensation; he stuck legitimately to the observance of the letter of the treaty. On February 9th, 1803, Lord Hawkesbury offered to waive all claims based on French encroachments; but a fresh grievance now took the foremost place, and our Foreign Secretary refused so much as to discuss Malta any further till the famous Report of

¹ Ann. Reg., 1803, 250-2.

² *ib.*, 1803, 264.

Colonel Sebastiani was satisfactorily explained.¹ Malmesbury was for clear language to France, being sure that Bonaparte would recede as we advanced, or advance as we receded, and he encouraged Addington to a more spirited attitude. Ambassador Whitworth was instructed to ask for explanations about Egypt, and to declare that without them Malta would not be given up.² Andréossi, French Ambassador in London, tried to reassure Hawkesbury about French designs, but Lord Hawkesbury thought Bonaparte very like Paul I., "really mad, and that his temper grew quite outrageous."³

The strange omission to withdraw General Stuart from Alexandria in July, 1802, according to the treaty, was the main cause or pretext of Sebastiani's mission to the East. Arriving at Alexandria on October 16th, 1802, he waited the same day on the commandant with Talleyrand's order to demand a speedy evacuation of Egypt. Stuart replied that he had received no orders to leave and that he expected to spend the winter there. The Report went on to give an account of Sebastiani's travels, of his commercial arrangements, and ended with a statement of the British and Turkish forces then in Egypt; declaring the Turkish army to be so ill-armed and ill-disciplined that 6,000 French would suffice to conquer it; a remark intended not so much to suggest another attack on it, as to emphasise the falling off in the Turkish army between 1798 and 1802. The report laid stress on the popularity of Bonaparte and of France in Egypt, and generally in the East.

This Report, soon after its publication in the *Moniteur* of January 30th, 1803, was translated in the English papers. It is difficult to understand the sensation it caused, though just offence was taken at an accusation in it of a letter from General Stuart to the Pasha of Cairo, which Sebastiani interpreted as conveying an insinuation

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1294, 5.

² Diaries, IV., 206.

³ *ib.*, IV., 20, February 16th.

to resort to assassination.¹ It was this charge mainly that was held to justify a demand for satisfaction or explanation, whilst the supposed threat of a fresh French attack upon Egypt gave a new claim to Malta as security against such a policy. On these pleas of satisfaction and security Lord Hawkesbury was able to take the line of the aggrieved party, and, instead of continuing to ascribe to uncontrollable circumstances our remaining in Malta, to adduce this report as giving us a new and valid right to its retention.

As therefore this Report was among the chief causes of the renewal of the war, its origin is of much historical interest. The French regarded it as an answer to Sir Robert Wilson's book on "The British Expedition to Egypt" of 1801. Wilson had himself taken part in that memorable episode at the age of twenty-three, and next year (1802) he published his book. Considering that England and France were then at peace, nothing could have been in worse taste than the abuse he heaped upon Bonaparte. He put the worst construction possible on Bonaparte's conduct in the Syrian expedition; after a description of the massacre of the surrendered Turks at Jaffa, he told the story of Bonaparte's having ordered, on his retreat from Acre, the administration of opium "in gratifying food" to 580 wounded or dying soldiers in the hospitals of Jaffa, and he declared that full details of this fact had been given before the Institute at Cairo by the physician who had since confessed to the execution of the order.² Long afterwards, when it was too late to undo the mischief he had caused, Sir Robert regretted the credence he had given to this story. Major Frye, who had also been in Egypt with Abercromby's army, and who knew that there was not "a syllable of truth in the story," which he considered as a "most unjust and unfounded aspersion,"³ says that on April 13th, 1816, Wilson's

¹ Par. Hist., XXXVI., 1354.

² Fourth ed., I., 120-3.

³ After Waterloo, 147.

sister, Mrs. Wallis, told him that her brother had "expressed deep regret that he ever gave credence and currency to such a report; and that he acknowledged that he was himself deceived. But he did Napoleon an irreparable injury, and undoubtedly his work on the Egyptian campaign contributed in a very great degree to excite the hatred of the English people against Napoleon."¹ In the long philippic against France, of July, 1803, sent round to be read by every officiating minister in England, this story of the poisoning of the 580 was told with great effect, and of course believed all over England.²

As to the story itself, Bourrienne's version conveys the impression that a few hopeless sufferers had their few remaining hours of life mercifully shortened, but not 580. Savary (the Duc de Rovigo) pronounced the whole story an atrocious calumny, and says that the army had no opium at the time.³ But Savary was then in Upper Egypt. Yet his denial was confirmed by Desgenettes, the physician; by General Andréossi; and by M. d'Aure, all of whom were present. It also favours their denial that Sir Sidney Smith, in his letter to Nelson of May 30th, 1798, though referring with just indignation to the horrible massacre of Jaffa, says not a word about any deliberate poisoning of the sick and wounded.⁴

Alison argued that Wilson's charges had nothing to do with Sebastiani's Report, because Sebastiani left Toulon on September 16th, 1802, and Wilson's book was not then published.⁵ But the Report itself was not published till January 30th, 1803, and Wilson's book had gone through more than one edition in 1802. In answer to Lord Hawkesbury's complaint to General Andréossi on March 15th, 1803, of "the very extraordinary publication" of Sebastiani, on March 29th Andréossi treated the matter lightly, as neither long nor difficult, and one that

¹ *ib.*, 147.

² Ann. Reg., 1803, 580.

³ *Memoires*, I., 161.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1798, II. 94.

⁵ Alison, V. 117.

almost might be passed over : " A colonel in the English army has published a work in England, filled with the most atrocious and disgusting calumnies against the French army and its general. The lies it contains have been contradicted by the reception which Colonel Sebastiani experienced. The publicity of his report was at once a refutation and a reparation which the French army had a right to expect."¹ In the fourth edition of his book in 1803, Wilson repeated his charges,² as he also did in the Preface to his *Brief Remarks on the Russian Army*, published in 1810.³

But, when all is said of the mutual grievances that again broke the peace, the state of party politics in England cannot be left out of the account.

Hardly had Addington taken Pitt's place as Premier than Pitt's old supporters wished him back in office. These men, who for their opposition to the peace and inclination to war were known, in the journalistic slang of the day, as " the blood-hounds,"⁴ Lord Malmesbury, Grenville, Canning, Windham, and others, caballed from the first to have Pitt recalled. And so little did Pitt seem to care for the Catholic claims that within a month of resigning on the Catholic question, he for a time gave way to the pressure of his friends, and intimated to the Duke of Portland his readiness to discuss the matter, if both the King and Addington wished it earnestly.⁵ But though at first the plot failed, it revived shortly afterwards with the hope of working on the King through the Duke of York. " Perhaps, if his Majesty knew," wrote Malmesbury to the Duke on November 2nd, 1802, " that Mr. Pitt had *entirely given up the Catholic question*, his return to office would be even an agreeable circumstance to him."⁶ Pitt was ready to sacrifice the Catholics for the Premiership, but he insisted on remaining so far loyal

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1319.

² II. 308-14. ³ Pref., XXII.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1803. 140, 237.

⁵ Pellew's " Sidmouth," I, 335.

⁶ Diaries, IV. 86.

to Addington as not personally to press him to retire in his favour.

A better chance for effecting the change was by a warlike policy against France ; for this was the King's most accessible side. The King had never liked the peace. He called it " an experimental peace," " a fearful experiment " ; one he could not avoid, failing a greater force of opinions like his own.¹ But he bore it with philosophy, saying wisely to Lord Malmesbury : " If we are not become wise enough to consider every event quietly and with acquiescence, we must have lived very negligently."

Malmesbury also disliked the peace ; he complained of " the childish fondness for peace," which, he said, had brought us " neither credit, satisfaction, nor even security." The obvious plan by which to get Pitt back was to represent Addington's policy to France as too pusillanimous. So Malmesbury complained of " a system of concession and giving way to France as the prevailing one."² The Duke of York represented the King as " infinitely hurt at what was going on ; he lamented most feelingly the submissive tone we held to France, and both on the peace itself and what had arisen out of it his feelings were as strong as ever."³ The plotters persuaded themselves that in wishing Pitt back for a more spirited policy their object " was to prevent war, not to make it,"⁴ or, as Canning said, " to give the country its right tone, and to restore it to its right level and rank, both at home and abroad ; this did not mean war, but only the wearing an aspect of preparation and defence."⁵ Canning found it easy to work on Pitt from this side. The peace had hardly been made before Pitt professed himself suspicious of Bonaparte, and advocated that, under the guise of peace, everything in the country should bear the aspect of war ; " that we should appear warlike in our

¹ *ib.*, IV., 63.

² *ib.*, IV., 189, Jan. 29, 1803.

³ *ib.*, IV., 83.

⁴ *ib.*, IV., 114.

⁵ *ib.*, IV., 82, October 20th, 1802.

provincial measures, warlike in our diplomatic ones, and above all warlike in our military and naval establishments." He also complained of the peace he had helped to make as made in such "an unskilful, hasty, and conceding way."¹ He valued peace rather as a recruiting period for the next war than as valuable in itself.² He thought the moment of a *certain war* would be the right moment for his resuming office; in this differing from Malmesbury, who wished to save his friend from the reputation of being a war-loving minister.

Public opinion was therefore forced into a warlike vein in the interests of Pitt's return to power. Addington, finding his place untenable, proposed in April, 1803, to admit Pitt into his Cabinet; but on Pitt's insisting on the return of the old war-gang with him (Lords Grenville and Melville, Windham and Spencer), the Cabinet intimated that they would prefer to dispense with Pitt than to have men forced on them who were hostile to the interests and peace of the country.³ When the King was shown the correspondence, he wisely remarked that it was "a foolish business from one end to the other; began ill, conducted ill, and terminated ill."

This state of internal politics helps to explain the external politics. But for the pressure on them by Pitt and Malmesbury for a more aggressive policy it is probable that Addington and Lord Hawkesbury would have kept the peace, and that Malta would not have been made a *casus belli*.

On February 18th, the First Consul received Lord Whitworth in audience, declared his wish for peace, but expostulated on the English attitude towards himself, especially in reference to the two French newspapers which we paid to abuse him; said that he would rather see us in possession of the Faubourg St. Antoine

¹ *ib.*, IV., 64, 75.

² *ib.*, IV., 66.

³ *ib.*, IV., 178, 9, April 13th, 1803.

in Paris than of Malta; that he would not provoke war, but talked of a possible army of 400,000 men, and of a possible invasion of England.

On February 21st, Talleyrand softened down these expressions, and said that Bonaparte would consent to arrangements for our keeping Malta for even six months, and Andréossi told Lord Hawkesbury the same, admitting that the increase in France's power justified our keeping pace with it.

On February 22nd, Bonaparte addressed the Legislative body in very much the same terms with which he had addressed Lord Whitworth.

Unfortunately at this time, Bonaparte laid before the Legislative body of France on February 21st, 1803, a document known as the "Acts of the Republic," which had an even worse effect on England than Sebastiani's Report. If the Report had caused a sensation, this created a boiling ferment. For after re-capitulating what the Consulate had done in France for the restoration of religion, of education, of justice and of commerce, it concluded with a review of the military situation of Europe and with particular reference to England. In that country, it said, two parties struggled for power; one that seemed to wish to keep the peace it had made; the other that had taken an oath of eternal hatred to France. Hence the attitude of England was both menacing and pacific. Precaution therefore was needed; but 500,000 men would be forthcoming for defence, and whatever happened in London, "no other people will be involved in new combinations—the Government says, with conscious pride, that England alone cannot maintain a struggle against France."¹ This was taken in England as a defiance to single combat, though in itself it only stated what had long been an axiom with our statesmen, that without Continental Allies we could do little in a war on the Continent.

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1361-70.

And it was the case that at that time we had no Continental Allies. But in the electrical state of the political atmosphere it would have been better left unsaid.

On March 8th, a King's Message was addressed to both Houses: "Very considerable military preparations" in the ports of France and Holland, though avowedly for colonial service, were said to necessitate precautionary measures on our side. This was followed by another Message on March 10th, for calling out the Militia; and 10,000 fresh seamen were voted for the Navy. But as the "very considerable military preparations" in the Dutch and French ports consisted only of two frigates in the roads of Holland and of three corvettes in those of Dunkirk, contemporary opinion could only explain the Royal message on the ground that the Government wished to be prepared for the outbreak of hostilities likely to ensue when their act of hostility in retaining the Cape was known at Paris.¹ News a few days later of the arrival at the Cape of counter-orders caused regret for their precipitate action in the delivery of a Message which spread universal alarm, and proved in fact fatal to peace.

But for this Royal message peace might still have been kept. For even the contemporary English chronicler, whose mistrust of Bonaparte and dislike of Addington's Government was quite conventional, admitted that up to that point, Bonaparte had shown his wish to avoid war by making every possible concession to the English demands resulting from the Sebastiani Report. He had agreed to secure the integrity of the Turkish Empire; to place Malta in the hands of Russia, Austria, or Prussia; nor had he denied the English claim for territorial compensation.² But now all was changed. Lord Whitworth found Talleyrand greatly agitated by the Royal Message, and it was in vain that he represented our arming as merely precautionary. Talleyrand showed

¹ Ann. Reg., 1803, 276.

² *ib.*, 1803, 277.

him a paper drawn up by himself and Bonaparte, which threatened retaliatory French measures; such as the marching of 20,000 men into Holland, failing explanation of the English armaments; encampments on the French coasts and on the frontiers of Hanover; and the counter-ordering of the withdrawal of French forces from Switzerland. At the same time he laid stress on the First Consul's desire for peace, which was borne out by Bonaparte's previous conversation with Lord Whitworth, when, as regards Egypt, he said that, had he had the smallest wish to take it by force, he could easily have done so by sending 25,000 men to Aboukir against the British garrison of 4,000 in Alexandria; but he would not do so, since, however, he might wish for it as a colony, "he did not think it worth the risk of a war, in which he might perhaps be considered as the aggressor, and by which he should lose more than he would gain, since, sooner or later, Egypt would belong to France, either by the falling to pieces of the Turkish Empire, or by some arrangement with the Porte."¹ The latter remark, relating to remote contingencies, was taken as a reason the more for our insisting on keeping Malta as a security for Egypt.

On Sunday, March 13th, occurred the famous scene at the Tuilleries when, in the presence of 200 people, Bonaparte expressed himself about our armaments with much excitement.² On March 16th, Lord Whitworth complained of this outburst to Talleyrand, who replied that Bonaparte, regarding himself as personally insulted by the English charges against him, had taken the first available opportunity of exculpating himself in the presence of the ministers of the different Powers of Europe; but he assured him that nothing similar should occur again.

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1298. Whitworth to Hawkesbury, February 21st, 1803.

² *ib.*, XXXVI., 1310.

Bonaparte then evinced a more conciliatory disposition. On March 18th, Talleyrand made repeated declarations to Lord Whitworth of his willingness to offer us any security about Egypt, but of his refusal to compromise about Malta. Lord Malmesbury described the British Ministers as most anxious to keep this message secret, and he justly asked, why?

Various proposals passed between the two countries. In answer to our claim to keep Malta in perpetuity, Bonaparte declared that no consideration on earth would induce him to consent to such a thing; and as Lord Whitworth replied that rather than abandon Malta, we were prepared to go to war for it, peace was not worth many days' purchase. On April 27th, Lord Whitworth received orders from home to leave Paris within seven days, unless Bonaparte agreed to our keeping Malta for ten years and promised to evacuate Holland and Switzerland. Talleyrand then asked if we meant to give up Malta, and, being answered in the negative, said that the negotiation was at an end; for that Bonaparte would never consent to our keeping it. At 8 a.m., of May 5th, a forged paper stuck up in the Stock Exchange from Lord Hawkesbury to the Lord Mayor, to say that France agreed to all our proposals, sent the funds up from $63\frac{3}{4}$ to $71\frac{1}{4}$. And a similar paragraph appeared in the *Times* of May 7th.¹

But it was a false hope. Whitworth was ordered to leave Paris within thirty-six hours, failing a satisfactory answer, and he left on Friday, May 12th. Yet he made a last effort for peace. He suggested that we should keep Malta for ten years, and in the meantime fit up Lampedusa, which belonged to Naples, as a naval station for large ships; the French accepted, provided the terms of our tenure were indefinite, and France received some compensation; but Whitworth was censured for listening to such a proposal.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1803, 386.

The differences were of a kind which mediation might have adjusted, and Fox's motion on May 27th, to appeal to Russia for mediation met with the full approval of the Addington Government. Napoleon also desired mediation. He sent Colonel Colbert to Petrograd to solicit the young Czar's mediation, and Colbert returned to Paris after succeeding in his mission on May 11th or 12th¹. On May 12th, Lord Whitworth left Paris; the very day of, or the day after Colbert's return with the Czar's consent to mediate. But for some mysterious reason this consent to mediate was not conveyed by the Russian Ambassador till May 24th, when it was too late to avert the war.²

On May 15th, orders were given to the Fleet under Lord Cornwallis to sail off Brest, and for letters of marque to be issued.

On May 16th, Andréossi left London, and an Order in Council granted general reprisals on all French ships and goods, and put an embargo on all French and Dutch ships in our ports.

But the matter was not yet closed; for on the same day a French messenger came with an offer to leave us Malta for ten years, provided France might occupy Otranto in the Bay of Tarentum for a similar period. But this was rejected at once on the ground that his Majesty would scorn to be a party to an act of spoliation.

Yet on May 17th, the British war party trembled, lest war should be averted. Malmesbury wrote at 9 p.m., Tuesday, May 17th: "It is manifest Bonaparte still is very anxious for peace, rather dreads war, and at this very hour I have a misgiving he will end by agreeing to *all* our proposals; and that *for the present* war will be evaded."³

But on May 18th, these fears were dispelled by the laying before Parliament of Great Britain's Declaration

¹ Malmesbury, IV., 253.

² Alison, V. 113.

³ Diaries, IV., 253.

of war against France.¹ Malmesbury's wish was fulfilled.

On May 22nd, news reached Paris from Brest of the capture of two French merchant vessels in Audierne Bay, previous to the declaration of war; in reply to which "the ferocious Corsican" made prisoners of war of all Englishmen between eighteen and sixty, then in France, as hostages for such French citizens as might have been captured by the British vessels.² More than 10,000 luckless Englishmen thus found their way into French prisons, from which many did not emerge till 1814; reprisals far in excess of the wrong done, though not, one might think, beyond the reach of removal by timely reparation for an undenied breach of belligerent custom.

The time had now come for Pitt to blow his war blast; which he did with such effect on May 23rd, that Malmesbury thought his speech the finest he had ever made; "never was any speech so cheered, or such incessant and loud applause; it was strong in support of war."³

On the same day, May 23rd, Fox too made one of the greatest speeches of his life,⁴ in which he criticised vigorously the several reasons for war adduced in the King's Declaration of May 18th.⁵ Whilst sharing in the general indignation against French action towards Holland and Switzerland, he denied that it menaced Great Britain; war would need to be perpetual and the French exterminated, if everything she did to increase her power was to be taken as hostile to us. So telling was his speech against the assigned reasons for the war that Windham's anger burst all bounds; he complained of the speech as wicked as well as mischievous; said that Fox had shown himself the "pander to all the base and

¹ Ann. Reg., 1803, 388.

² *ib.*, 1803, 390, 1.

³ Diaries, IV., 256,

⁴ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1437-90.

⁵ *ib.*, XXXVI., 1377-85.

illiberal passions of the people," and contrasted his lack of patriotism with Pitt's.¹ And by 398 to 67 the House of Commons approved of the renewal of the war; the King writing to Addington on March 25th of the pleasure with which he had seen the defeat of Grey's amendment to the Address by so great a majority: "a most favourable event at the onset of the business."²

But history cares nothing for large majorities, nor for the opinions of Kings. Thus even Alison, the Tory historian of the war, sums up quite coolly but decisively on the side of Fox and his minority, that "the British Government manifested a feverish anxiety to come to a rupture, and that, so far as the transactions between the two countries are concerned, they were the aggressors." All that had happened indicated a "determined spirit of hostility, and a resolution, on one pretence or another, to put an end to amicable relations between the two countries."³

But though the war party were thus successful in driving Addington and Hawkesbury into war, they did not succeed in the immediate restoration of Pitt to power, as it was hoped would be the result of war. On June 3rd, Colonel Patten moved his famous resolution of censure against the Addington Government, and Pitt moved his amendment for "reading the orders of the day," a more contemptuous expression of Parliamentary displeasure. But the attack was premature, and misfired; he could only gather 58 votes against 335; and the censure on Ministers was defeated by 227 to 36. Not till May of the next year did Pitt succeed in supplanting Addington, his old friend whom he had made his enemy; and then it was to the misfortune of both England and Europe.

¹ *ib.*, XXXVI., 1490.

² Pellet's Sidmouth, II., 185.

³ V. 126.

CHAPTER II

1803. The Threatened Invasion

THE war began with vigour and promptitude on both sides. On May 25th General Mortier, with his army prepared on the Hanoverian frontier after the King's message, summoned the Hanoverians to surrender. Nothing had been done on our side to resist such an attack, nor did the Duke of Cumberland's proclamation prevail on the people to shed the last drop of their blood for the sake of the Elector of Hanover. They refused to rise in mass, and their conquest was virtually complete by June 4th, when the Convention of Suhlingen would have allowed the Hanoverian army to retire beyond the Elbe with the honours of war. George III.'s refusal to ratify this convention only led to a worse one concluded on July 5th. The Hanoverian army was disbanded; the French took possession of large military stores, and continued in occupation of the country, without the smallest protest by either Austria or Prussia against this attack on one of the Princes of the German Empire. For these Powers cared little about Malta, for which the First Consul claimed the right to hold Hanover as a hostage. England in those days paid dearly for a King who in his separate personality as Elector of Hanover exposed this country constantly to Continental complications. When George III. heard of the loss of Hanover, he bore it, says Malmesbury, "with great magnanimity and a true *kingliness* of mind."¹

At the same time the French re-occupied Brindisi, Otranto, and Tarentum, in the kingdom of Naples, to hold as long as the English held Malta.

¹ Diaries, IV., 270.

On our side orders were sent on the day war was declared to attack the French and Dutch colonies that had been given up at the recent peace. Thus St. Lucia was won back on June 22nd, 1803 ; Tobago on June 30th ; St. Pierre and Miquelon on the same date ; the Dutch colonies of Berbice, Demerara, and Essiquibo in September. Our intervention in St. Domingo between the French and the blacks ended with the surrender and removal of the French forces from the southern parts of the island, and with the collapse of Bonaparte's hope of making the island a powerful and flourishing French colony. In their contest with the natives great atrocities were attributed to the French ; the natives, forced on board ships, were drowned or suffocated with sulphur fumes, and it was said that " tortures of the most cruel nature," such as burning at slow fires, " were daily and hourly practised by the French armies and government."¹ But who shall judge of the truth of atrocities attributed by enemies to one another ?

Bonaparte's energies turned again to our invasion, and on a larger scale than ever. The great American province of Louisiana had been ceded by Spain to France on October 1st, 1800, and by its sale to the United States on April 30th, 1803, for £3,200,000 he not only saved it from becoming an English conquest, but secured a large sum towards the cost of his plans for invasion. The sums of £2,880,000 and of £650,000, exacted later in the year by treaty from Spain and Portugal respectively, contributed to the same end. But how far did he really believe invasion to be possible ? In his interview with Lord Whitworth on February 17th 1803, he talked much on the subject. What had he to gain, he asked, by a war with England ? A descent on England was his only means of offence ; and was it likely that, unless driven to it by necessity, he would risk his position, his life, and his reputation, when the chances were that

¹ Ann. Reg., 1803, 330.

himself and the greatest part of the expedition would go to the bottom of the sea? But, though the chances were a hundred to one against him, he would make the attempt, if war ensued.¹ This rather confirms Bourrienne's statement of December 15th, 1803, that Napoleon had no real idea of an invasion, and that his massing of men on the northern coasts of France had another purpose. And what could any flotillas or the newest gun-boats do against a navy which Pitt wrote of on December 13th, 1802, as superior to the navies of all Europe put together?² What need was there for alarm, Addington fairly asked, when during the last war the French navy had dwindled from 105 sail of the line to 39, that of Spain from 79 to 68, that of Holland from 27 to 16, whilst we had 192 ships of the line, besides other ships; an excess of 60 sail of the line above the combined fleets of the three powers, and could add another 50 sail within a month?³

But of course no risks could be taken. Against a French army of 427,000 men our regular army of 130,000, and a militia of 80,000 seemed so inferior that on June 28th the House of Commons voted a force of 50,000 conscripts, the first time in English history; but the exemption of volunteers from such conscription relieved from the stigma of compulsion the force of 300,000 men who came forward to resist the impending danger. In France, in 1803, the conscripts raised amounted to 120,000; more than half of the 208,233 young men calculated to reach the age of twenty in the population of France; and the blood tax grew more exorbitant as the war advanced. So great was the success of the British volunteer force that "long before the year had expired, all sense of fear" had vanished⁴; but the degree of alarm the projected invasion had reached in the summer may be judged of by the extraordinary circular sent round

¹ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1298.

² Malmesbury's Diaries, IV., 156.

³ Parl. Hist., XXXVI., 1039.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1803, 328.

to every parish to be read in the churches.¹ This appeal to patriotism was based on fear. People were told of the most awful atrocities alleged against the French in their invasions of Germany in 1796 and 1798; and how the lower classes had been the special objects of their bitterest malignity; "against them was directed the sharpest bayonet; for their bodies the sharpest torment;" among the poor alone did the soldiers defer the murder of parents till they heard the shrieks of their children in the flames that burnt their homes. People were warned of the dreadful consequences of a French landing; "they would affix badges upon us, mark us in the cheek, shave our heads, slit our ears, or clothe us in the habits of slaves." Such was the style of war propaganda little more than a century ago.

Yet the year cannot have closed without some real alarm; for in December rumours came from Paris that Bonaparte was about to leave that city; that oxen were being slaughtered at Bordeaux for the victualling of the fleet; that ships and transports were ready to sail from the Texel and from Brest; and that Christmas day was fixed on for the sailing. How real the anxiety was is shown by the fact that plans were made for the King's moving to Chelmsford or to Dartford; for the Queen's going to Worcester with the Royal family; for the Bank books being moved to the Tower; and for the artillery and stores from Woolwich Arsenal being transported inland.² Rightly no risks were to be taken.

¹ *ib.*, 1803, 585-594.

² Pellew's Sidmouth, II., 237-9.

CHAPTER III

1804. Pitt to the Helm again

FROM a military and naval point of view Addington's conduct of the war had been reasonably successful ; but Pitt's political support, warmly promised to his successor in 1802, had waxed colder as time went on ; and, if he and his friends were to return to power, it could only be by criticism of Addington's defensive measures. A series of attacks by Pitt and Windham in February, March and April, 1804, resulted on April 25th in so small a Government majority that Addington yielded to the Parliamentary Coalition formed against him, and the destinies of the country were on May 12th again entrusted to the same Minister who had so signally failed to bring the last war to a satisfactory conclusion.

Yet there was no real reason for a change, nor did any clear gain result from it. Addington justly boasted that his military measures had raised our forces to 580,000 men ; a larger number than France or any other nation possessed, and amply sufficient for the defence of England and Ireland.¹ It was mainly by his plan for improving recruiting that Pitt supplanted Addington, but his Additional Forces Bill, which threw the responsibility of recruiting on the parishes, was admitted before the end of the year to have been a complete failure. In Kent the new Act produced only eleven men ; in the Cinque Ports only one ; in the North Riding not one. " The complete failure of the Recruiting Bill," wrote Addington on December 3rd, 1804, " is confessed, and I am assured that our military force is less than it would have been if

¹ Pellew, II., 266.

that Bill had not passed. So much for the promised augmentation of the army ; and as to its promised exertions, and all that was said of offensive operations, we have now reached the end of a campaign without a single instance of success against the enemy in any part of the world, except the taking of Surinam, which was planned and executed by the late Government."¹

It was a great misfortune that the King was obdurate against Pitt's wish to make Fox a member of his new Cabinet. Between these great rivals there had arisen such political sympathy at last that Pitt in May, 1804, intended Fox to be his Foreign Secretary, and the mere rumour of such a chance of peace caused the funds to rise. But George III. blocked the way by refusing to hear of such a thing. Yet one may well believe that, when in the following month a feeler of peace came from France, Pitt, with Fox at his side, instead of Lord Harrowby, might not have "thought that no good consequences could result from the communication," and so nipped the negotiation in the bud.² This was one of the many opportunities of peace during this war which were never tested, but rejected more or less offhand on the idle assumption of their insincerity.

It was hoped that the substitution of Lord Melville (Dundas) for Lord St. Vincent at the Admiralty would greatly improve the condition of the navy, nor did Lord Melville fail to infuse greater vigour into that service. Our navy, overwhelmingly strong before, became still stronger. But all its attempts against the Boulogne flotilla failed, and the Catamaran project ended in ridicule. Catamarans were small oblong copper vessels, filled with combustibles and arranged for a time explosion ; possibly the progenitors of the modern torpedo ; they had been tried with no success against our ships in the American war, nor was there reason to expect of them a greater success in 1804. But Lord Melville won great

¹ *ib.*, II., 326.

² Rose's Diaries, II., 160.

credit for his supposed origination of such a plan for blowing up the Boulogne gun-boats; the press raised public hope to a feverish expectation of success, even going so far as to publish a false account of the blowing up of 150 gun-boats before the news came of the absolute fiasco of the whole scheme under Lord Keith on October 2nd, 1804.¹

But the chief difference between Addington and Pitt referred to the question of Continental Alliances. Addington was for friendship, not for alliances, with the Continental monarchies, such as had proved so disastrous in the previous war. Between England and France alone a naval decision seemed to him the only one possible, and, confident of such decision being in our favour, he was averse from diverting the issue to a war on the Continent, where the chances were more favourable to France. But Pitt, despite experience, saw our best defence in a new Coalition, which should divert French strength from ourselves alone, and dissipate it against other foes on the Continent.

The course of events seemed to play into his hands. Europe was in the state of a powder magazine which needed but a spark for its explosion. Such a spark was supplied by the great Royalist conspiracy and trial in the early half of 1804. Georges Cadoudal, the Breton chief, and other conspirators had landed from England in August, 1803, and proceeded to Paris to execute their design. It was said that this design was not the murder of Bonaparte, but an equal combat, just as it was said that the plot against Paul I. only incidentally led to his murder. Pitt, according to Cadoudal's story, in supplying his uncle Cadoudal with a million francs for his venture, strongly exhorted him not to inflict a mortal wound on Bonaparte, but to take him, if possible, alive, with a view to deport him to England, and thence to St. Helena.²

¹ Ann. Reg., 1804, 141, II., 553, 4.

² Georges Cadoudal, by his nephew, G. de Cadoudal, 1887, 296.

The letters to Cadoudal from the future Louis XVIII. and from Windham show how close was the reliance placed in these quarters on this courageous rebel.¹ But all these hopes were destroyed by the easy detection and miserable collapse of the plot. After a trial of twelve days, Cadoudal and seventeen others of the forty-five prisoners were on June 10th condemned to death, after the tribunal had deliberated for twenty-four hours; in the case of nine Bonaparte remitted the capital sentence; five were sentenced to two years' imprisonment, whilst the rest were acquitted.² General Moreau was deported to the United States; Lord Malmesbury's evidence is that in 1803 he had asked for £500,000 for raising a royalist army in France under Pichegru.³ Pichegru's death in prison saved him from the capital sentence.⁴ The French believed that this plot aimed at the assassination of their First Consul.

Closely mixed up with this plot were two of our ambassadors, Drake at the Court of Bavaria, and Spencer Smith at that of Wurtemberg. The French police cleverly succeeded in getting addressed to themselves the letters which betrayed the nature of the conspiracy that was afoot, and the several Courts of Europe to which Bonaparte sent the evidence of their complicity in the royalist plot evinced feelings of strong condemnation. Lord Hawkesbury's defence on the matter⁵ was easily brushed aside by Talleyrand's reply of September 5th, 1804⁶; to the effect that it was an abuse of international usage to invest men with diplomatic functions for the easier execution of the functions of spies.

But it was the punishment of the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien for his share in this plot which really gave fresh life to the slumbering war fever. The young Duc was only thirty-four, the son of the Duc de Bourbon,

¹ *ib.*, 235, 419, 438.

² Bignon's "France," II., 371, 2.

³ Diaries, IV., 277.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1804, 638.

⁵ April 30th, 1804, Ann. Reg., 1804, 600-3.

⁶ *ib.*, 657-9.

and grandson of the Prince de Condé. By the French military penal code anyone engaged in a plot tending to civil war, or to the overthrow of the Republic, was punishable with death; and among the six charges on which a military commission of March 21st, 1804, sentenced the Duc to death was one for fomenting a rising in certain departments of France, and one for participating in the plot for the assassination of the First Consul.¹ But it was his arrest on the neutral territory of Baden by an armed force on March 15th, that vexed the moral sense of Europe, especially of Russia, joint guarantor with France of the integrity of Germany. Ten other emigrant conspirators were taken at the same time.² On March 10th Talleyrand informed the Elector of Baden that, a previous request to arrest these emigrants having failed, their forced arrest by two French detachments was intended. And on July 2nd the Elector of Baden, in reply to the strong protest presented by Russia to the Diet at Ratisbon, sensibly deprecated such further consequences of the incident as might again disturb the peace of Germany.³ But Bignon, whom Napoleon by his will entrusted with writing the history of his time, was of opinion that the charges, founded on suspicions and conjectures, were never proved, and that the sentence was both illegal and barbarous.⁴

Sweden and Russia were loudest in remonstrance. Alexander I. put his Court and all his Ministers at foreign Courts into mourning; at a Court function he passed the French ambassador without a word. Although Alexander at his accession had adopted a pro-English policy, he had continued on friendly terms with Bonaparte. Their treaty of peace of October 8th, 1801, had been followed on October 11th, by a secret treaty, in which, for preserving the general peace, they had agreed to settle between them the troubles of Italy and Germany. But on neither side

¹ Ann. Reg., 1804, 628, 9.

³ *ib.*, 1804, 635.

² *ib.*, 1804, 627.

⁴ III., 273, 291-307.

had all the terms been executed ; the King of Sardinia had not received the promised compensation for the loss of Piedmont ; nor was Bonaparte's occupation of Hanover and of Neapolitan territories in accordance with the treaty. Friendliness had turned to coldness, and on July 21st, 1804, Alexander demanded the evacuation by France of Naples, as also of Germany, and respect for its neutrality ; and compensation for the Sardinian King. Talleyrand retorted by a demand from Russia of her engagements under the treaty ; among others, of a spirit of less partiality towards England, and of her uniting with France to effect a general peace. The embittered correspondence came within an ace of a rupture. Russia made warlike movements, and when on May 18th, 1804, the title of Emperor was conferred on the First Consul, Alexander refused to recognise the new title of his former friend.

But not so Francis of Austria, who on August 11th assumed for himself and his heirs the title of Emperor of Austria, to balance the assumption of such a title by the ruler of France. Yet also in Austria, no less than in Russia, though her attitude was so far pacific that in deference to requests from France she ordered the French *émigrés* to quit her dominions, strenuous preparations were made for the war that seemed rumbling on the horizon.

Prussia also was becoming restive. Frederick William III. had been among the first to recognise the new Imperial constellation in the political firmament. Count Haugwitz had been for ten years the great supporter of the French alliance, and when in 1803 Napoleon, whose strongest interest was to keep Prussia as a neutral buffer state against a Russian or German attack, offered Prussia, in return for an offensive and defensive alliance, the cession of Hanover in perpetuity, Haugwitz and other leading statesmen would have accepted the offer. But the King, who, influenced by the Queen and the Court, had become strongly anti-French, would not comply, and the ultimate agreement was that, provided the French

forces in Hanover did not exceed 30,000 men, Prussia as a neutral would permit no Russian or other troops to march across her territories. But the substitution of Count Hardenberg for Haugwitz as Prussian Foreign Minister was indicative of the coming change in the politics of Prussia.

To these elements of a world-conflagration Sweden contributed her share. The anger of the King of Sweden at the Duc d'Enghien's fate did not cool ; and a note of September 7th, 1804, from the Swedish ambassador at Paris, addressed to *Monsieur* Napoleon Bonaparte, put an end to all former amity. On December 3rd Pitt made a treaty with Sweden, granting her an annual subsidy of £80,000 in return for certain military advantages conferred on us in Pomerania.

But in France Napoleon's position had been much strengthened by a succession of ceremonies and pageants highly captivating to the public imagination. The assumption of the Imperial title, with a general raising of titles ; the splendid fêtes at Paris and Boulogne to inaugurate the institution of the Legion of Honour ; the vote of 3,574,898 against 2,569 for making the Empire hereditary in Napoleon's family, followed next day, December 2nd, 1804, by his coronation by the Pope in Notre Dame, seemed to place the restoration of the Bourbons far beyond the bounds of a reasonable expectation.

In these circumstances the addition of Spain to the force arrayed against us was a deplorable addition to the difficulties of England. By the treaty of 1796, Spain, if called on, was bound to supply France with 15 ships of the line, and 24,000 men, or with her whole forces, if emergency required ; but in October, 1803, the liability was commuted into an annual subsidy of £2,880,000 ; so great an increase to the power of France as to justify much resentment in England, and a strong diplomatic remonstrance. News at the end of September, 1804, of great naval preparations in Spanish ports led on our side

to more menacing remonstrance, which the Spanish promise on October 3rd to desist from armaments, whose object had been misinterpreted, failed to satisfy. Two English frigates were ordered to cruise off Cadiz to intercept the homeward-bound treasure-ships from America, and to stop all Spanish ships laden with stores of war materials. The refusal of the Spanish commander of the four treasure-frigates on October 4th to be detained, led to an engagement, in which the Spanish frigate, *Mercedes*, was blown up with the loss of 240 men, and the other three were captured with a smaller loss of life, but with a treasure on board estimated at £2,000,000. As this premature act of hostility occurred before any declaration of war, whilst our ambassador was still at Madrid and negotiations were still in progress, Spain declared war on December 12th, despite our efforts at explanation and expressions of regret. But the justice of a war so begun was hotly debated in Parliament, and the Parliamentary majorities on the affirmative side were rather of numerical than of moral value.

The British case was explained at great length in the Declaration of War, dated January 24th, 1805.¹

The King of England had in those times a direct pecuniary interest in a war by reason of the Droits of Admiralty, which from an early period had come down to him as Lord High Admiral of England. All ships taken before the declaration of war were among the rights that helped to swell his private fortune ; to which were added all ships detained before a declaration of war, all ships coming to our ports in ignorance of such declaration, all goods acquired from wrecks or from pirates. The custom had some reason in days when, before the Revolution of 1688, the expenses of wars fell more on the Crown than on Parliament ; but when the cost of war was transferred to the country, to the country should also have gone the profits. Between the year 1793 and May 30th, 1810, a

¹ Ann. Reg., 1805, 608-15.

sum of £7,344,677 yielded to the Crown an income of £180,000 a year. From the gross sum there were considerable deductions, as of £2,336,745 given to the captors of ships, and other sundries, but there remained enough to enable the King to give large presents of money to the Royal family, or to any person for any purpose. The custom, as Brougham said, gave the Crown an interest in going to war: "It gave an interest, not merely in commencing hostilities, but it gave an interest in commencing them in a way the least honourable to the national character." He instanced the Dutch war in the reign of Charles II. as a war "entered upon for the sole purpose of intercepting the Smyrna fleet . . . a war exceeding in atrocity even the late attacks on the Spanish and Dutch ships."¹ Yet the calling the seizure of an enemy's ships before declaration of war a piracy was rebuked in Parliament as an unpatriotic imputation on the national character.²

The relations of the States of Europe to one another were based on principles hardly higher than might prevail between brigand bands. Charges of perfidy were universally interchanged. The French thought as meanly of our respect for the law of nations as we thought of theirs. Thus Talleyrand's circular note of September 5th, 1804, to all French agents abroad charged the British Government with having for the last half century sought to abolish the system of public law which united all civilised nations; with having sported with the sanctity of oaths and of treaties; especially in regard to maritime law, the old conventions of which were violated on every shore and in every sea; so that a mere proclamation of blockade by squadrons 200 leagues away sufficed to prevent neutrals from trading with her enemies.³ And the capture of the Spanish ships gave some ground for justifying Spain's declaration of war by the disregard for

¹ Parl. Deb., XXI., 242-77.

² Parl. Deb., XXI., 275.

³ Ann. Reg., 1804, 657.

international law manifested by the incident.¹ Lord Grenville, now in opposition to Pitt, spoke of the capture as an "atrocious act of barbarity, contrary to all law of nations, and one that stamped indelible infamy on our name."² The Duke of Clarence (William IV.) called it an act of piracy that had disgraced the annals of our naval glory.³ But these were the sentiments of a negligible minority.

¹ *ib.*, 1804, 699-703.

² February 11th, 1805, Parl. Deb., III., 360.

³ *ib.*, III., 502.

CHAPTER IV

1805. Pitt's Last Coalition Against France

THE new year began with an incident which, if rightly used, might have saved the world from many years of needless bloodshed. Napoleon, again defying diplomatic pedantry, wrote to George III., on January 2nd, a direct offer of peace. "I am not ashamed," he said, "to make the first advances. Peace is the wish of my heart, but war has never been adverse to my glory. I conjure your Majesty, therefore, not to refuse yourself the satisfaction of giving peace to the world. Never was an opportunity more favourable for calming the passions, and giving ear only to the sentiments of reason and humanity." The King, he went on, had in ten years gained more than the whole extent of Europe in territory; if a coalition of the Continental Powers were the object of war, such a coalition would only strengthen the French Empire; if the French Colonies were the object, to France her colonies were only secondary considerations. It was a melancholy prospect for two great nations to fight for fighting's sake. The world was large enough for France and England to live in, and reason still had power to reconcile them, if only the inclination were not wanting.

But that, unfortunately, was just what was wanting. King George, always a stickler for his royal dignity, addressed his astonishment to Pitt at "the French usurper's" approaching him in this objectionable way, and approved of Pitt's answer that no reply could be returned till after communication with the Allies and especially with Russia.¹ Both he and his Minister repeated the mistake of January, 1800, by refusing to

¹ Rose's Pitt, 516.

think of Peace. Pitt called the letter "a very unexpected and singular communication," and could see in it nothing but a trick to embarrass his Government at the beginning of the session.¹ Had the King not proscribed Fox from office, it is probable that the French peace offer might have received so much more conciliatory a reply than it received from Lord Mulgrave as might have resulted in a peace. For there would have been no assumption of Napoleon's insincerity without the least attempt to test it. There was indeed no evidence that it was insincere. Apart from motives for peace derived from his wish to improve the condition of France, Napoleon was aware of the Coalition which Pitt was again trying to weave round him, and had nothing further to gain from war. But peace would have destroyed Pitt's plans for another Confederate war; he had already gained Russia and Sweden, and was hopeful of gaining Austria and Prussia; therefore the answer was, as delivered in the King's speech of January 15th, 1805, that the King's desire for peace was dependent on its being conducive to the general peace of Europe, and that the offer could only be answered after consultation with certain Continental Powers, especially with Alexander of Russia. Thus was shelved a peace which it was an hypocrisy to pretend that either the King or Pitt desired. And on January 19th a secret note to the Russian ambassador laid down the lines of the new Anglo-Russian policy. France was to be reduced to her pre-Revolution limits; that is, all that she had conquered was to be conquered back; new barriers were to be drawn round her, by annexing Belgium to Prussia, by restoring Lombardy to Austria, and by annexing Genoa to Piedmont. The Coalition aimed at restoring to their former state Switzerland and the United Provinces, the kingdoms of Sardinia and Naples, and the Duchies of Modena and Tuscany. More difficult war-aims were excluded from this

¹ Pellew's Sidmouth, II., 348. January 11th.

programme, such as the restoration of Belgium to Austria, the restoration to Germany of the States on the left bank of the Rhine, or any change regarding Parma and Placentia. It was hoped that the bribe of Belgium would tempt Prussia into the war ; the bribe of Lombardy, Austria.

In this scheme of conquest, which differed but little from that of Paul I., whom the world called mad, George III. and Alexander I. flattered themselves that their views were "pure and disinterested;" but why plunge England into a new war of indefinite duration, from which only Prussia and Austria and Sardinia were to derive definite benefits? Why disturb the existing repose of Europe for a repose in the dim future, only possibly attainable by arms? Why should not the European Powers have guaranteed at once each other's possessions, as they then stood, instead of deferring such guarantee till they had overwhelmed the world with war and misery? Why should they not at once have established that system of public right which they looked for as only obtainable by war? Pitt, now in the last year of his life, did not live to answer these questions, nor were they ever answered.

Were it not that no statesman of modern Europe can ever offer the olive branch with one hand without holding the sword tight in the other, the secret convention that Napoleon made with Spain only two days after his offer of peace to George III. (Jan. 4th, 1805), might be taken for proof of the insincerity of his offer. Nothing more likely than that he had long conceived the idea, failing peace, of adding Spain's naval force to his own for our invasion. And it was this addition of thirty Spanish ships of the line to thirty-eight French that made possible that wonderful naval design which caused more just alarm of a practicable invasion than any previous threat of it. The successful issue of the combined fleets from their several blockaded ports; their arrival in the West Indies; their pursuit by Nelson; their thirty days'

start of Nelson back to Brest, whence they were to cover the passage from Boulogne of the 2,500 transports prepared for 150,000 invaders, accorded with a plan which mainly owed its defeat to the resourcefulness of Nelson and to Sir Robert Calder's great victory over Villeneuve, on July 22nd. Though Napoleon turned instantly to carry out his vast designs against Austria, it was not till Villeneuve had failed in another attempt at a combined attack that he desisted from an embarkation that seemed imminent, and on September 1st, ordered the whole of the invading army to march towards the Rhine. No invasion was possible after that, but what put the final seal on all further ideas of invasion was the great battle of Trafalgar on October 21st, that memorable date when Nelson, with 27 sail took 19 of the combined fleet of 33, and fell himself a sacrifice to his victory.

Whilst these events signalised Napoleon's amazing energies at sea, his energies on land were no less conspicuous. His coronation at Milan on May 26th, with the Iron Crown of Charlemagne, as King of Italy, was followed on June 8th by the annexation to France of the Ligurian Republic, celebrated on June 30th by Napoleon's entry into Genoa on the usual scale of magnificence. The absorption of Parma and Placentia followed. Italy was greatly the gainer. Lombardy never flourished more than under the Vice-Royalty of Eugene Beauharnais, Napoleon's son-in-law, thanks to "the admirable principles of Government which he received from the sagacity and experience of Napoleon."¹ Splendid edifices, useful canals, marked the French government of North Italy.

But the complete expulsion of the French from Italy and Elba was among the foremost war-aims of the new League. To re-deliver populations to their old oppressors and servitudes was called the deliverance of Europe. Russia entered the League on April 11th, 1805, with a promise from Pitt of £1,250,000 for every 100,000 men.

¹ Alison, V., 280.

Austria also joined soon after the resignation in June of Cobenzl, head of the pacifist party, and the transfer of power to the Austrian militarists. Three millions were to be paid her for 320,000 men for 1805, four millions for the year 1806, though not without grumblings that this was not enough.¹ Sweden, already in the League, on August 31st, dived into the pocket of the British tax-payer at the rate of £12 10s. a man. And these military slaves of the Continent, bought for a price below that of a dog, were supposed to be fighting for the freedom of Europe! But the pretexts for war have generally been mere phrases; like that mirage of a "lasting and solid peace" which these preying powers promised the world in return for its bloodshed.²

The mediation of Prussia stayed the hand of Austria for a short time, but the war fever soon prevailed. When asked by Napoleon the intention of her increased armaments and military preparations Austria declared that it was for no hostile purpose, but that she was ready to negotiate a peace on the most moderate terms, involving no interference with the internal affairs of France, as were also Russia and England. Talleyrand replied for Napoleon on August 13th and 16th: Austria had only to declare her neutrality, and peace would follow with England on the terms of the Peace of Amiens; one consequence of such a peace should be a separation of the crowns of France and Italy. Why, he asked, should the Emperor of Germany and Austria form magazines and bake biscuits; it was the common law of Europe that the assembling of troops, the formation of magazines, the baking of biscuits, amounted to a declaration of war. Austria must choose; if she desired peace, she must return to a peace footing; if war, the Emperor flattered himself with the hope of the same successes as in former wars.³

Austria chose war, risking the fulfilment of Napoleon's

¹ Parl. Deb., VI., App. 12.

² *ib.*, App. 6.

³ Parl. Deb., VI., App. 63-85.

hope. Still she hesitated, proposing to her Russian ally a more favourable conjuncture for beginning hostilities, and knowing herself outnumbered by the French. But just as our Minister at St. Petersburg was urging on Russia in early September "the expediency of losing no time in beginning the war," so Russia urged the Austrian Court to "renew the war as speedily as possible;" being certain of the good faith of her Russian ally, she could safely oppose France alone, in reliance on the Russian troops, which were ready to march.

Austria accordingly took the offensive. After demands on Bavaria, then in alliance with France, to unite her army with the Austrian or to disband her army, the Austrians crossed the Inn and occupied Munich, from which the Elector and his army had retired on September 8th. The Elector complained that the Austrians had conducted their invasion with the customary ruthlessness of invaders; levying requisitions, laying fields waste, plundering cattle, and forcing Bavarians into the Austrian service.¹

Wrong as was Austria's disregard for Bavaria's neutrality, it was in keeping with the universal lawlessness of the time. In 1803 General Mortier on his march to Hanover had passed through neutral States that lay on his way, and occupied Hamburg, Bremen, and Cuxhaven. Alexander, with equal contempt for the neutrality of Prussia, threatened to march through Silesia and Pomerania on his way to Bavaria; and, according to Czartoryski, Lord George Gower, meeting the Russians on his return from England promised Russia a subsidy, originally meant for Prussia, if it were necessary to force a passage through Prussian territory.² On the sea we paid as little regard to the neutrality of Spain. But the worst case of offence came from France.

It was the obvious policy for Napoleon to attack the Austrians before the Russians could join them and

¹ October 10th, 1805. *Ann. Reg.*, 1805, 708. ² *Memoirs*, II., 98.

this he did by the marvellous rapidity with which from north, west and south he poured his legions into Bavaria, whither they converged by their several routes, without a hitch. Scant respect was shown for the neutrality of Prussia, through whose territories of Anspach and Bayreuth Bernadotte marched on October 3rd with 60,000 men; even the pacific King was roused to anger, nor was easy to appease, though Napoleon sent Marshal Duroc to make ample reparation. But to the Prussian war party the incident was a perfect god-send as providing a cause of offence against the French. The beautiful Queen was the head of the war party; a lady who, loving amusement much, loved war even more, as the more exciting form of it. From her the war craze spread throughout the social structure, and for a time tended to throw Prussia into the arms of Russia and England. If only Pitt, at the instance of the Russian ambassador in London, would have consented to cede Hanover to Prussia, the alliance of Prussia might have been had for the price, and the Coalition of the three monarchies might have anticipated its ultimate triumph by nine years; as it was, Prussia adhered to her neutrality, and later received Hanover from Napoleon as the reward of her conduct.¹

Things moved rapidly. But the Allied plan of campaign failed. Though the Russian forces reached the place agreed on for a juncture with the Austrians two days before the time, the Austrians, by not waiting for them, threw out the whole plan, and led to disaster.² The French cut the communications between the Russians and Austrians. On October 20th, the Bavarian stronghold of Ulm immortalised itself as well as General Mack, its gallant defender, by a capitulation which compelled a garrison of 30,000 men to march out and lay down their arms at the feet of Napoleon; for which Mack was sentenced to twenty years of imprisonment. On October 24th, Napoleon was received with great joy into Munich,

¹ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 84.

² Parl. Deb., VI., 144.

the Bavarian capital, nor did it take more than three weeks for Ney to clear the Austrians out of the Tyrol and to occupy all their strongholds (November 18th). On November 13th, the French entered Vienna, whence the Emperor had fled and where the excellent discipline of the French and their abstention from plunder afforded some alleviation for the enormous contribution exacted from the city and the conquered parts of Austria. After that, on November 19th, the disasters of Austria were somewhat relieved by their belated junction with their Russian allies.

Meantime Alexander had gone to Berlin (October 25th), where by a secret convention on November 3rd, with Frederick William III., Prussia was bound to begin hostilities against France on December 15th, unless Napoleon consented to give up all French acquisitions made since the treaty of Lunéville, and to restore Switzerland and Holland to their independence. The day following this treaty of Potsdam a romantic midnight meeting between the two monarchs at the tomb of Frederick the Great bound each of them by the most solemn oaths to the inviolability of their joint compact. Count Haugwitz was to be the bearer of this defiant ultimatum to Napoleon, who was little likely to be pleased by it.

But a very unpleasant surprise was shortly in store for Prussia.

For Europe was on the eve of the battle of Austerlitz. On November 25th Napoleon sent General Savary to Alexander to congratulate him on his arrival at the headquarters of the Allied army and to suggest a reconciliation. But after three days of parley Savary returned with nothing gained but a reciprocation by Alexander of the friendly tone of Napoleon's letter.¹ It was too late for the Russians to be willingly baulked of a victory they thought certain. They attributed the Austrian defeats to

¹ Alison, V., 495-7.

Austria's incapacity, and thought Paris lay straight before their own invincible troops. The French were mere "canaille," and Prince Dolgorouki, aged twenty-five, was sent with a letter insultingly addressed to "the chief of the French nation," not to "the Emperor." France, it said, might have peace at once for her abandonment of Italy; if beaten, she must surrender the Rhine, Piedmont, Savoy and Belgium.¹

The answer was Austerlitz, on December 2nd, 1805, with such a defeat of both Russians and Austrians that the Russians sought an immediate peace, and the Austrians an armistice. Alexander, whose bravery was conspicuous on many later occasions, was compelled to precipitate flight, nor did Czartoryski scruple to tell him that his personal presence on the battlefield was only an embarrassment to his generals: "It was precisely in the place where you were that the rout was immediate and complete"—a bold thing for a subject to say to a sovereign.²

The Emperor of Austria undertook that his brother of Russia would abide by the armistice, provided his troops were suffered to return unmolested to Russia. When Alexander asked Savary what guarantee Napoleon would require, or what security he himself could have for a suspension of his pursuit, Savary replied, "He asks only your word of honour, and has instructed me, as soon as it is given, to suspend the march of Marshal Davoust." "I give it with pleasure," replied Alexander, "and should it ever be your fortune to come to St. Petersburg, I hope I may be able to render my capital agreeable to you."³

Thus when the Prussian envoy reached Napoleon's camp, it was hardly the time to present him with an ultimatum of war; for Austria no longer belonged to the Coalition. The very day on which hostilities with France should have begun, December 15th, Haugwitz agreed to an alliance with France, by which, in return for ceding

¹ Rambaud's *Russie*, 536, 7.

² *Corresp.*, 44.

³ Savary, II., 142, 3.

Anspach to Bavaria, and Neuchâtel and Cleves to France, and for acceding to the approaching Peace of Presburg, Prussia was to annex Hanover and all the Continental dominions of George III., till a general peace. And the Prussian King ratified this treaty with an insignificant modification. Naturally this produced great anger in England, where great hopes had been built on Prussian help in the war.

Austria had no choice but to make her separate peace. By the Peace of Presburg on December 27th, 1805, she had to give up to the Kingdom of Italy Venice and Istria and Dalmatia, the port of Cattaro, and the Venetian Isles; all in short that she had gained by the treaties of Campo Formio and Lunéville in exchange for the loss of the Netherlands. She had to cede the Tyrol and other territories to Bavaria; to recognise as Kings the late Electors of Bavaria and Wurtemberg. These two kings, and the Elector of Baden, became legislatively independent of the Emperor of Germany, and received accessions of territory; whilst Austria only gained the county of Salzburg, and together with France guaranteed the independence of Switzerland and of the Batavian Republic. These were the chief points in the humiliating treaty by which Austria had to pay for having yielded to the seductions of Pitt.¹

¹ Ann. Reg., 1805, 668-73.

CHAPTER V

1806. The Peace that Failed

THE new year opened blackly. The collapse of the Continental confederacy had happened just as Fox had predicted in his opposition to it on July 21st, 1805, when he warned the House of Commons against granting money where the chances were 100 to 1 against success, and where Austria's having to submit to a peace dictated by France would be the probable result!¹ Pitt's Ministry was virtually doomed. As Lord Sidmouth wrote on January 5th, public discontent was at its height, and might be traced on every countenance. Then on January 23rd, 1806, died Pitt; "died of old age," wrote Lord Malmesbury, "at 46 as much as if he had been 90."² The last year of his life, 1805, was enough to kill any man. Not least among the misfortunes of that year was the scandal of the exposure of the frauds connected with Lord Melville's administration of the Navy. Henry Dundas had been Treasurer of the Navy from 1784 to 1800; had himself in 1785 carried a Bill for the better regulation of the office of Treasurer of the Navy, to prevent public money from being used by the Treasurer for his private use. Yet here was this same man, created Lord Melville on December 24th, 1802, charged before Parliament with this very offence. Even Pitt had failed to save his old friend and colleague, one of the foremost in the previous war against any peace with France. The case against Melville was too strong, nor had he any other course than to resign the Admiralty on April 6th, and the next month his

¹ Parl. Deb., V., 537, 8.

² Diaries, IV., 346.

name was erased from the Privy Council. Lord Malmesbury tells of the huzzas and shouts in the House of Commons on his condemnation, and says that the proceedings against him "exceeded in party spirit and savage feeling all that he ever recollected in this country."¹

Pitt, feeling his power waning, had again tried in September, 1805, to get the King to withdraw his proscription against the admission of Fox to office; but the King was as obdurate as he had been in May, 1804, when Pitt had begged that Fox might be a member of his new Cabinet.

Pitt had also seen his military schemes fail signally in 1805. Nothing had been gained by sending the Russian and English forces to Naples, except to tempt the King of Naples to a breach of his neutrality and so to his dethronement. As to the forces, 18,000 British, 12,000 Swedes, and 10,000 Russians, landed in October in Pomerania for the recovery of Hanover; their late arrival and the quarrels of their commanders resulted in nothing more than in their all returning home again. The news of Trafalgar, reaching London on November 7th, 1805, must have greatly relieved the gloom caused by the news of the Austrian capitulation at Ulm, which Pitt at first flatly refused to believe; but the news of Austerlitz was too much even for his optimistic spirit, and Lord Malmesbury's assertion may well be believed that he never recovered from it.²

His death caused no small consternation; and on Lord Grenville's succeeding to his office, the King himself had to yield and to accept as his Foreign Secretary the very man whose earlier admission to that office would probably have ended the war. But Fox's life now was but a matter of months.

Those last months were spent in an endeavour to negotiate a peace with France, and, but for his death in September, it is possible that he would have achieved his end. How strong was his will to peace is shown by his

¹ *ib.*, IV., 338.

² Diaries, IV., 339, 40.

correspondence with Prince Czartoryski, then at the head of the Russian Foreign Office, at the end of March.¹ Count Woronzov, the Russian ambassador in London, represented him as in favour of a peace at any price, even of that of the abandonment of our allies.² But a statesman who favours peace is always exposed to such a charge from a statesman who prefers war.

Negotiations began with a letter from Fox to Talleyrand on February 20th, telling him of a recent visit from a man who had a plan for the murder of Napoleon, and warning him to take precautions. The contemporary whisper that Fox invented this story, in order to get into touch with Talleyrand, is perhaps, silenced by the statement that the would-be French assassin was kept in custody till March 7th, when he was embarked at Harwich on a vessel bound for Husum.³ The ice being thus broken, Napoleon replied through Talleyrand, that he desired peace with this country and would for his part not delay it for a moment. In all the subsequent transactions the sincerity of this desire was manifest.

The strange thing was that, before the negotiation began, the restoration by France of Hanover to George III. was insisted on by us as an indispensable preliminary. "The French," said Lord Grenville, on January 2nd, 1807, "felt the injustice of the act, and consented to restore it. This was consented to previous to the commencement of the negotiation, and never afterwards became an object of dispute."⁴ But nothing of this great concession appeared in the heavily censored papers submitted to Parliament about the negotiations.⁵

We were bound to Russia to make no separate peace, and from the first Fox insisted on a condition which has so often barred the road to peace. Napoleon vainly offered the recognition of our right to Hanover, Malta,

¹ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 133-7.

² *ib.*, II., 145.

³ Ann. Reg., 1806, 174.

⁴ Parl. Deb., VIII., 266.

⁵ *ib.*, VIII., 92-209.

and the Cape ; Lord Yarmouth at Paris could consent to nothing without the leave of Russia.

But Russia herself had not the same moral qualms about her duty to us. She sent M. d'Oubril to negotiate with France, and on July 20th her signature of a separate peace morally dissolved the bond between us. When at a later stage Alexander I. refused to ratify this treaty, we were under no moral obligation to revert to our bondage to Russia, which placed us at her mercy for the making of peace or war.

But the chief difficulty was Sicily. We were in actual possession of Sicily, in trust for the King of Naples, and as we believed that Talleyrand had offered to base the peace upon actual possession, that is, on the *uti possidetis* principle, our retention of Sicily was insisted on by us as a *sine qua non* of peace. As the admission of this principle did not exclude, as Lord Grenville said, the discussion of mutual cessions, the endless disputations on the point were a needless waste of time. Why not compensation elsewhere for the King of Naples ? France suggested the Hanse Towns as compensation (July 1st) ; then Dalmatia, Albania, and Ragusa (July 9th) ; Fox so far yielded to the principle of compensation as to suggest the addition of Istria, the whole of the Venetian States, and Venice itself (July 18th) ; the Russian Minister promised to get the Balearic islands accepted in lieu of Sicily (July 20th).

The French, regarding their separate treaty with Russia as equivalent to a great success in war, then began to raise their terms : they intimated a return of Pondicherry, St. Lucia, Tobago, Surinam, Goree, Demarara, Berbice, and Essiquibo to France and Holland. At the end of July Lord Lauderdale was sent to Paris to assist Lord Yarmouth in the negotiation ; but he, like Lord Yarmouth, made the demand for his passports an implied threat of a continuance of the war. When Lord Lauderdale landed at Calais on August 3rd, he was met by crowds

on the shore, loud in their prayers for peace. But he was dogged about Sicily, though open to suggestions of "just and adequate indemnification" to the King for its cession (August 7th); and on August 11th the French negotiators said that, if the *uti possidetis* meant exchange and compensation, the Emperor adopted it. Surely then nothing was left but to settle the actual exchange.

But all went wrong when news reached Paris on September 6th, of the refusal of Russia to ratify her treaty, although Alexander I. on April 3rd had promised "on his Imperial" word the faithful execution and his Imperial ratification of all that d'Oubril might sign.¹ By one of those sudden changes so frequent in Russia, the war party had gained the upper hand over the incalculable mind of the Czar, and Czartoryski had retired from the Foreign Office on June 17th, though as a member of the Imperial Council he still continued to advocate in December a peace with Napoleon.² Although this refusal to ratify the treaty of July 20th, 1806, which provided for the evacuation of Germany by France, released us from our obligations towards Russia, our Court continued to say that it could do nothing without Russia's leave. It was in vain that Napoleon raised his offers to secure peace, nor did these cease after Fox's most untimely death on September 17th. Well might George III. say that he never thought to live to regret Fox's death. On September 19th Talleyrand promised great concessions for peace: Lauderdale might insert in the treaty "whatever he might conceive would tend to reconcile the existing differences between France and Russia." On September 25th the French offer added Tobago and East Indian settlements to Hanover, Malta, and the Cape, provided Sicily were ceded to France, and the Sicilian King indemnified with a fair annuity and the Balearic isles. Had Fox only lived, Lord Lauderdale would hardly have been allowed to maintain his stiff,

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 797, 8.

² Memoirs, II., 174-88.

unbending attitude, nor to rebuff the new proposals, not only by a repeated demand for Sicily, but for compliance with "all the objects" insisted on by Russia (September 26th). As Russia pressed for the surrender not only of Sicily but of Dalmatia, which France had acquired by the Treaty of Presburg, and France would only yield Corfu, the whole negotiation collapsed, and Lord Lauderdale on October 5th received the passports for which he had so frequently and so vexatiously asked. War continued for another ten years because we chose to fetter our destinies with those of Russia; because we acted as the vassals of a Power whose military existence depended on our money.

Curiously friendly were the concluding letters between Talleyrand and Lord Lauderdale. Napoleon, wrote Talleyrand, would be ready to renew negotiations in the midst of any events, and to replace them on the basis laid in concert with the illustrious Minister whom England had lost, and who, but for having been snatched from the world in the midst of his work, had nothing to add to his glory but the reconciliation between the two nations (October 1st). Lord Lauderdale expressed his pleasure at the tone and moderation of this communication on October 6th, and on October 21st appeared the King's Declaration, giving the royal version of the failure to make peace, and of course throwing all the responsibility on the wickedness of the enemy.¹

Few victories could have caused greater delight in England than the news of the failure of Lord Lauderdale's mission. "The shouts of applause," with which the news was received at Lloyd's Coffee House, expressed a feeling universal over the country. The appetite for conquest was strong at the time, having been whetted by the ease with which Sir Home Popham, after the re-capture of the Cape on January 13th, 1806, had sailed across the Atlantic, without orders, and taken Buenos Ayres on

¹ Parl. Deb., VIII., 209-13.

June 27th. The longing for the gold mines of Potosi and Peru was as strong as when in 1739 it had painted the war with Spain in such glorious colours ; nor did many pause to reflect that Buenos Ayres was 1,800 miles from the mines of Potosi. The easy expulsion of our forces from Buenos Ayres on August 12th did not allay the hope of still conquering the whole of Spanish South America, if only peace were not made. " We must with shame acknowledge," writes the chronicler of the time, " that the prevalent sentiment of the nation was joy at the prospect of extended commerce and conquest in South America rather than disappointment at the failure of peace."¹

It was not that the nation did not love peace, but that powerful interests loved profit more. Plato never made a truer generalisation than when he made Socrates say that the real motive for all wars was money, and in the last resort the satisfaction of men's bodily lusts.² War aims may be cloaked under concern for the " liberties of Europe," or for " religion," or for " justice," but the real aim is always wealth by the acquisition of more or better markets. In all our wars of the eighteenth century the Newfoundland fisheries were the one object that was always constant. Napoleon probably spoke truly, when on October 20th, 1805, he said to the surrendered Austrian officers after Ulm, " I want nothing on the Continent ; it is ships, colonies, and commerce which I desire." And it was our disappointment at Napoleon's not consenting to a commercial treaty on a free trade basis that was our chief cause of dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Amiens ; as Talleyrand wrote to Fox on April 1st, 1806, that in Napoleon's opinion the true cause of the renewal of the war was his refusal to make us a treaty of commerce.³

Whilst diplomacy was thus contending for Sicily, the real contest was by force. As we needed the control of

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 185. ² Phædo 66. Jowett's Plato, I., 439.

³ Parl. Deb., VIII., 95. Bignon, III., 6.

Egypt for the safety of India, so we needed Malta for that of Egypt, and now Sicily for that of Malta. The French must be kept out of it at any cost. So on November 20th, 1805, a Russian Squadron of 14,000 men and a British force of 10,000 had landed at Naples, to encourage the King of Naples to join the Anglo-Russian Coalition. But on September 21st, 1805, the King of Naples had agreed with the French to a treaty of neutrality, ratified by Napoleon on October 8th, by which, in return for the French quitting Neapolitan territory within a month, the King had promised to let no belligerent land or make use of his ports nor put his armies or garrisons under an officer of belligerent nationality.¹ When therefore six weeks later, though the French had gone, the King of Naples broke the treaty by suffering the Allied forces to land, and by placing his army under a Russian general, the anger manifested by Napoleon was not surprising. Austerlitz made him master of the situation, and on December 27th, 1805, he punished his perfidious ally by pronouncing him dethroned. The Russians had to sail back to Corfu; the English, under Sir James Craig, retired to Sicily, whither the Court soon followed towards the end of January, 1806, to the unconcealed delight of its subjects, whose hatred for the Queen was more especially marked.

The middle of February, 1806, saw the triumphant entry of Joseph Bonaparte into Naples, and when on March 30th, Joseph was proclaimed King of the Two Sicilies by Napoleon, nobles and people alike manifested their aversion for the old Government by the joy they displayed for the new one. Joseph did what was possible to alleviate the distresses caused by the invasion, and the beneficent reforms he introduced into every department of Government fully justified the changed loyalty of the Neapolitans.² It would have been better to have left Naples to his undisturbed possession.

Unfortunately the British Government took up the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1805, 664.

² Alison, V., 677, 686.

Bourbon cause with an ardour that now seems amazing. Sir Sidney Smith arrived at Palermo, where the Neapolitan Court was, in the middle of April, 1806, and Sir James Craig resigned the English force to Sir John Stuart, who reluctantly consented to the wish of the Court to undertake an expedition against Calabria, whence the French were intending to invade Sicily. It was on this expedition that he won against much superior French forces on July 6th, 1806, the battle of Maida, in which the English loss of life is said to have been 45 as against 700 French, and for which he was by King Ferdinand created Count of Maida. This signal victory caused a rising against the French in Calabria, and a consequent warfare of the most terrible ferocity. The Calabrians had for leaders such criminals as Fra Diavolo and the priest Pane de Grano. "Galley slaves, polluted with every crime, were collected by order of the Court of Palermo, and landed among its former subjects, in order to keep alive the insurrection."¹ Sir John Stuart had to send troops expressly to check the enormities committed by our Calabrian Allies. The French retaliated, and many villages and their inhabitants were destroyed by fire. When General Fox was sent to take over the command of the English army, nothing would induce him to comply with the Court's wish to attempt to drive the French from Naples, and, after the fall of Gaeta to the French had released 18,000 men, Masséna had small difficulty in recovering all that the English and Calabrians had at one time taken. Finally Joseph Bonaparte ended the futile contest by an amnesty. By malaria or the sword the French were said to have lost about 15,000 men, nor had we at last anything to show for our military intervention but months of carnage and destruction and atrocity that contributed nothing to winning the war. If the Neapolitan episode was of Pitt's conception, it adds one more to the many failures for which he was responsible.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 146.

Louis Bonaparte was made King of Holland a few months after his brother Joseph had been made King of the Two Sicilies.¹ Thus on all sides monarchical forms of Government were transplanting republican, and this under the direction of the very man who was the leading representative of the republican ideal, and who found in all his brothers most unsatisfactory kings.

Europe lived in the excitement of incessant political changes, many of them probably beneficial. The greatest of all these changes was the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine on July 12th, 1806, which placed Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Baden, and other lesser German States under the protection of Napoleon, and cut them off entirely from the old Empire of Germany. On August 6th the Emperor Francis II. had perforce to declare his resignation both of the Imperial Crown and of the Imperial Government. In effecting this scheme Napoleon only successfully carried into execution a plan long before conceived by the old French monarchy, and taken up by the Republic.² On a small scale this new plan anticipated the idea of a League of Nations, establishing an alliance between France and these German States, and making the war of any one of them the common war of all.³ It was a great improvement on the old constitution of the Empire, under which so loose was the tie between the several members of the League to one another or to their head, that any State might make war or an alliance with any foreign State without let or hindrance.⁴ And as placing a population of sixteen millions between France and her Austrian and Russian enemies it was one of the greatest triumphs of Napoleon's diplomacy.

The dissolution of the German Empire gave Denmark the opportunity of declaring Holstein for ever separated from the German Empire, and annexed to Denmark:

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 698-701.

² Fournier, Congress von Chatillon, 3.

³ Ann. Reg., 1806, 818-25.

⁴ Parl. Hist., XIII., 358.

a transaction destined to bear bitter fruit in 1863 in the decisive defeat of Denmark by Prussia and Austria.

This Confederation of the Rhine brought Prussia back into the war. With the wealth and prosperity that had come from many years of peace, the wish for war had grown. Prussia had long halted between the English and the French alliance. The ample subsidies promised by England in the autumn of 1805 and the blandishments of Alexander I. were neutralised by Austerlitz, after which she agreed with France to occupy Hanover till a general peace. On January 26th, 1806, Count Hardenberg requested the removal of French troops as part of the conditions of the Prussian occupation, and the next day announced the departure of the French troops and the occupation by Prussian. But Napoleon wanted a stronger treaty than this, and on February 15th, at Paris, it was agreed that Prussia should hold Hanover permanently and exclude the British flag from all North German ports, in return for the cession of Anspach and Bayreuth to Bavaria. On March 16th Prussia closed all ports and rivers under her control against British trade and shipping, and on April 1st Hanover was formally annexed to Prussia.

All this, of course, was very displeasing to England. On March 17th, Fox protested strongly—the transfer of Anspach and Bayreuth to Bavaria could not justify the seizure of what belonged to the Elector of Hanover; nor would George III. ever consent to the alienation of his rightful possessions. On April 20th, George III. issued a long declaration expressive of the same resolution, and calling on the German Emperor as well as on Russia and Sweden to defend his cause.¹ And in the course of the same month retaliation began: the Prussian rivers were blockaded by English vessels, an embargo placed on Prussian vessels in British ports, and the British ambassador recalled from Berlin. Thus began our first war with Prussia.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 692-7.

Fox's condemnation of Prussian policy as combining everything that was contemptible in servility with everything that was odious in rapacity well expressed the general English sentiment. For to take the property of somebody else in exchange for something given to another party was clearly conduct that needed defence ; but an age which had ceased to pay more than lip service to the sanctity of treaties and the laws of nations had no just claim to regard Prussia as a sinner above all other nations. The tangle of cross-purposes into which her diplomacy or duplicity led her touched indeed the comical ; and when Lucchesini, her ambassador at Paris, came to learn that whilst Prussia was receiving at Napoleon's hands the long coveted Hanover, he was making the restoration of Hanover the basis of his peace negotiations with England, the cup of Prussia's indignation became full to overflowing. Patriotism took the place of reason ; war songs in the theatres silenced reflection, and the Queen, riding in uniform at the head of her regiment of Hussars through the streets of Berlin, roused the war fever to the pitch of frenzy. Frederick William III. is said to have been the last person in his Cabinet to give his vote for war.¹

During September the usual movement of troops and the usual protests heralded the coming storm. Napoleon had nothing to gain from a war with Prussia, on whose continued neutrality he based his policy of neutralising the enmity of Russia and Austria. He described a Franco-Prussian war as a political monstrosity. The long recital of Prussia's grievances, justifying war, cited not one which necessitated it.² But the expected favour, if not the aid of England and Russia, and the natural wish for war in an army of 250,000 men turned the scale to the more perilous course. Prussia's demand on October 1st, that France should evacuate Germany and offer no obstacle to the formation of a Northern German Confederation of

¹ Ann. Reg., 1806, 168.

² Ann. Reg., 1806, 800-11.

the States not included in that of the Rhine received no answer ; or rather it received that answer which made the months of October and November for ever memorable for one of the greatest military disasters in history.

The Duke of Brunswick, of the once famous manifesto of 1792, as commander-in-chief of the Prussian forces, lost his reputation and his life in the rapid campaign that ensued. The battles of Auerstadt and of Jena both on the same day, October 14th, virtually settled the campaign against Prussia ; thenceforth the tale was of nothing but of flights and surrenders. The flying Prince Hohenlohe had to capitulate with 17,000 men ; strong fortresses like Spandau, Stettin, and Custrin fell like packs of cards ; the garrison of Magdeburg, 12,000 strong, surrendered as prisoners of war. Berlin itself was entered by the French on October 25th, and by Napoleon on October 27th. Within a few weeks the mighty military instrument of Prussia was levelled with the dust. The French took over the whole military and civil government of Prussia between the Rhine and the Elbe. Brunswick, Hesse Cassel, and Hanover were occupied, and the contributions levied by the French surpassed all previous records : six millions from Prussia alone.

Saxony, which had shared Prussia's defeat, was easily detached from the Prussian connection, and by a treaty with France on December 12th, 1806, was admitted into the Confederation of the Rhine. It was some consolation possibly for the heavy contribution levied upon her that her Elector was raised to Royal dignity ; and she remained faithful to the French alliance through all the subsequent years of war.

The King and Queen of Prussia and their Ministers fled to Memel, soon the only place left to them. On November 28th the king refused to ratify the armistice at Charlottenberg, which stipulated for the cession till a general peace of all his territories between the Rhine and the Vistula. Ultimately he gained little by not

making peace before worse befell. But he relied on the aid of that most mutable of monarchs, the young Czar of Russia, for the restoration of his fortunes ; and Alexander was thinking more of conquering Turkey than of helping Prussia. Though a dispute between himself and the Porte had been adjusted, the Czar proceeded to invade the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia (Rumania) with as little concern for moral principle as was ever shown by Napoleon. He was keen on conquest, and before the end of the year had conquered large districts of Turkey.

The French continued their victorious career over Prussian Poland. The entry of Napoleon into Warsaw was greeted by the Poles with an enthusiasm for their expected deliverer which was only exceeded by their ultimate disillusion. The gaieties enjoyed in that city put but little check on military operations. Indecisive battles between the French and Russians continued till the retirement of both armies into winter quarters. The chief Russian general of this time was Benningsen, the hero who on the occasion of the murder of Paul I. had played so prominent a part. When the conspirators had got Paul on his knees, it was Benningsen's words : " Have we come here to talk ? " which preceded the fatal blow given by Nicolai Subow.¹

Prussian militarism had thus been crushed beyond any visible prospect of recovery, and the Queen was correct in her later remark to Napoleon, " Prussia has been well punished for her folly."

As for Prussia, she had no claims on our assistance. We had been at a sort of war with her since April 23rd, though Baron Jacobi, her ambassador, was not recalled from London till August 15th, 1806. And when Jacobi wished to settle Prussian differences with us, it was not till October 11th that, after his return to London on the 10th, he saw our Ministers : and Jena was fought on October 14th. Her war with France came on the world

¹ Schiemann's *Ermordung Paul's*, 30.

as a swift surprise. And when Lord Morpeth was sent to Berlin to negotiate the terms of our assistance, Prussia would make no definite promise to restore Hcnover, for she then hoped to beat the French; nor in that case would she pledge herself to restore Hanover to George III.

THE MARITIME QUARREL

It was in this same year that the maritime war assumed a fiercer aspect. Napoleon's Berlin Decrees of November 21st, 1806, are only intelligible by connecting them with his contention that the laws of war at sea ought to be the same as the laws of war on land. Thus the declaration that all English property in French or allied dominions might be seized as lawful prize was his reply to our claim to capture and confiscate the private property of merchants at sea. The declaration that all British subjects found in France or in allied territories should be made prisoners of war was his answer to our custom of making prisoners of enemy merchant crews. And the prohibition of all commerce with England and the declaration of the British islands as in a state of blockade was provoked, if not justified, by the order in Council, signed by Fox on May 16th, 1806.

This famous Order was itself an act of reprisal against the French confiscatory Decrees of October 18th and November 3rd, 1805. It took the form of a declaration to the United States Minister, that, in consequence of the new French measures against English commerce, "all the coasts, rivers and ports, from the river Elbe to the port of Brest, inclusively, were in a state of blockade, such rivers and ports being deemed to be actually blockaded." But it was not meant to prevent neutral vessels charged with non-enemy cargoes, not being contraband, from approaching this coast or from entering or leaving such rivers and ports (except the coast, rivers and ports between Ostend and the Seine, already strictly blockaded), provided such neutral vessel was not loaded

in a port hostile to Great Britain, nor destined for any hostile port on its departure.¹

Lord Grenville argued that this was not a fictitious but a real blockade, "perfectly conformable to the understood and acknowledged laws of war."² But the French view was that our extension of the right to blockade ports to the blockade of coasts with no real blockading force was an illegal departure from customary maritime law. "It is only to the new extension given to the right to blockade," wrote Napoleon to Champagny, on January 10th, 1810, "that I opposed the Berlin decree. . . . I only regard it as a sort of protest, and a violence opposed to a violence"³ Ultimately, in 1856, after the Crimean war, most of the Powers agreed with Napoleon's view, and declared that a blockade to be legal must be effective; though it was left undecided whether a blockade from any distance was legitimate: The war might have been shortened by many years if Napoleon's wish for a Congress to bring into harmony the different maritime laws of different States had not been repulsed by the other Powers.

As it was, reprisals only begat reprisals, and the anarchy was made worse than ever. On January 7th, 1807, the Whig Ministry replied to the Berlin decree by authorising British vessels and privateers to warn or seize all neutral ships trading between one French or allied port and another. And when this failed to get the Berlin decree repealed, the new Tory Ministry on November 11th, 1807, issued fresh Orders, which made it compulsory on neutral vessels to French or Continental ports to pay tribute first in British harbours. To which Napoleon replied with the Milan Decree of December 17th, 1807, which made good prize any neutral vessel that submitted to the British orders.⁴ The justice and policy of these

¹ Schoell, "Recueil," IX., 342.

² Parl. Deb., X., 478. February 15th, 1808.

³ Correspondance de Napoléon, XX., 109, 10.

⁴ Parl. Deb., X., 126-148. Alison, VI., 335-357.

Orders was fiercely debated in Parliament. Lord Erskine, "as a peer of the realm in this great Council" of Parliament, arraigned them as a violation both of the law of nations and of the law of the land on March 8th, 1808; and though the Lords decided against him by a majority of 66, it should perhaps weigh more with posterity that in the same camp with Lord Erskine were Lord Grenville, who had been a Prime Minister, and Lord Grey, who was destined to become one.

CHAPTER VI

1807. Friedland, Tilsit, Copenhagen.

IN the winter campaign of 1806-7 the Prussian fortresses in Silesia fell to the French within a few months; Breslau, the capital, on December 31st, 1806, Brieg, Kosel, Schweidnitz, Neiss, and Glatz, last of all, on June 4th, 1807. These places, which had cost Frederick the Great so much bloodshed over so many years to set up as barriers against Austria and Russia, were totally dismantled by Napoleon's orders, and Jerome Bonaparte was made Governor of Silesia.

On January 28th, 1807, England agreed with Prussia to bury in "eternal oblivion" her recent offences; Prussia renouncing all her pretensions to Hanover, and opening her ports, and England releasing all captured Prussian ships.¹ So repentant Prussia was received back into the fold of respectable monarchical Powers.

Of the battles between the French and their Russian and Prussian enemies the one that most struck the imagination of Europe was that of Eylau, fought on February 7th and 8th in all the misery of a snowstorm. The losses on either side surpassed those of any battle yet fought in the war, and the masses of dead and wounded lying on the snow-covered ground presented a most sickening spectacle. Each side sang *Te Deums* for victory and exaggerated the slain of the enemy, but the French remained on the ground and it was Benning-sen who retired from it.

Nevertheless, Sir Robert Wilson, who was present throughout this campaign, thought the defeat of the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1807, 712-4.

French decisive of the fate of Europe and expected them to retreat. His great dread was lest Napoleon should save himself by a peace: "I would rather lose two limbs than that peace should be signed with France on this side of the Rhine."¹ Wilson's estimate of Napoleon was expressed in a letter to Lord Hutchinson on February 2nd, 1807, that the Napoleonic mind was "intoxicated with the success with which cowardice had gorged him."² Napoleon has been charged with many sins, but it was probably reserved to Wilson to charge him with personal cowardice. George Jackson described Sir Robert as "one of the most harum-scarum fellows that perhaps ever existed";³ but few played a more prominent part as general, diplomat, or spy than was played by Sir Robert in those days.

Napoleon made several efforts for a peace after Eylau. Benningsen told the French truce-bearer that his orders were to fight, not to negotiate, and he sent him on to the King of Prussia, at Memel, with his strong advice to accept no terms. The terms offered were the restoration to the Prussian King of all his dominions as before the war, and (except as regards Russia and England) a free hand in the matter of alliances.⁴ Sir Robert Wilson says that several letters passed between Napoleon and Frederick William.⁵ Napoleon entreated the Prussian King to believe him sincere and as no less desirous of peace with Austria and England than with Prussia.⁶ And throughout the campaign Sir Robert says that Napoleon "had been induced frequently to solicit peace."⁷ But the allies preferred war. In vain Napoleon proposed a Congress of France, England, Sweden, Russia, Prussia, and Turkey; the Jingo counsels then prevalent in Russia and Prussia rejected all overtures, and on France was cast the blame for the continued war. Sir Robert

¹ Life, II., 130.

² *ib.*, II., 415.

³ Diaries, II., 108.

⁴ Jackson, Diaries, II., 88.

⁵ Russian Campaign, 172.

⁶ Alison, VI., 88.

⁷ Russian Campaign, 172.

Wilson expressed his delight that all proposals for an armistice with a view to peace were rejected with scorn : a rejection for which there was soon to be ample cause for repentance.

In his message to the French Senate, dated March 20th, Napoleon said, " We offered peace to England before the fourth Coalition ; the same peace we offer to England still." He proclaimed his readiness to offer the same terms of peace to Russia that she had lately rejected. At this stage the continuance of the war was not due to Napoleon.

It was by no fault of England that Alexander I. had weakened his own strength against France by sending 60,000 men on an unjust invasion of Turkey ; yet he threw on England the chief blame for his failure. An English force, with a Swedish and Prussian, it was argued, should have landed on the Baltic, raised the siege of Stralsund, marched up the left bank of the Oder, besieged and taken Stettin, and thence marched to Berlin. So easy it seemed —on paper. Sir Robert Wilson shared the Czar's views about our failure to send troops ; if we did not send troops we should become in Russian eyes " a despicable ally and a mercenary people, seeking colonies for private advantage instead of assisting the common cause of Europe."¹ But the Whigs were then in office, and party spirit affected Wilson's vision.

Peace having failed, the French conscripts not due till September, 1808, had to be called upon in March, 1807. The pace was increasing ; 240,000 youths for the slaughter in seven months was a heavy demand, nor can the orator who announced the necessity in the French Senate have been alone in the tears that are said to have been drawn from him on the occasion.

In April the Emperor Francis II. made simultaneous offers to mediate between the four warring Powers, with a view to a general peace. France accepted the offer.²

¹ Life, II., 163-4.

² Ann. Reg., 1807, 712.

and the offer was accepted on April 25th by Canning, then Foreign Minister, subject to its acceptance by the other belligerents. But before all the replies could reach Vienna the war put an end to all further thought of negotiation. Yet not before the Convention of Bartenstein of April 25th had been agreed upon between the Russian and Prussian monarchs, by which they defined as their chief war aims:—

1. The restoration to Prussia of her territories of 1805.
2. The dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine.
3. The restoration of the Tyrol and Venetia to Austria.
4. The restoration of the House of Orange, and indemnities to the Kings of Naples and Sardinia.

To this Convention both England and Sweden soon afterwards acceded ; and we resolved to send 20,000 men to co-operate with a Swedish force in Pomerania against the French rear ; to take more Swedes into our pay ; and to pay Prussia a million for the campaign of the year. A few weeks sufficed to reduce all these designs and hopes to vanity itself.

The 20th of May saw the capitulation of Dantzic, at the mouth of the Vistula, after a long siege by the French. Napoleon made a direct proposal to Alexander for a negotiation, declaring his readiness to consider any overtures. In the sincerity of this proposal the contemporary English chronicler fully believed, describing him as manifesting an “even earnest desire for the end of hostilities.”¹ But, like the losing gambler, Alexander preferred to try another throw of the dice with fortune.

Nor had he long to wait. The spring campaign, begun on June 5th, was finished by June 25th. If the battle of Eylau could be counted indecisive, there was no indecisiveness about the battle of Friedland on June 14th. The losses on both sides were on a prodigious scale, and the battle lasted sixteen hours. Wilson attributed the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1807, 167-169.

Russian defeat entirely to Benningsen, who "seemed physically as well as morally imbecile on this occasion."¹ He himself was sick with grief and vexation at England's humiliation, and he hoped that Vienna might be sacked for Austria's failure to assist.² Alexander sent Benningsen orders to treat with the conqueror. Another Coalition had failed, like its predecessors.

For its failure great blame was thrown at the time both in Russia and England on the Whig Government of Lord Grenville, so triumphantly terminated by George III in March, 1807. And this blame has passed unquestioned into such histories as Alison's. The drift of the criticism of the policy of Lord Howick, Foreign Secretary in the Grenville Ministry, by Canning, his successor in the Tory Ministry of the Duke of Portland, and by Lord Castlereagh, Secretary at War, was that we ought to have co-operated more closely with Russia; ought to have subsidised her more lavishly; ought to have prevented the Prussian catastrophe in October, 1806; above all, ought to have sent 25,000 or 30,000 men to Pomerania to join with a Swedish force in cutting off the retreat of the French from Poland back to France. Windham's reply to Lord Castlereagh's suggestion of our sending 25,000 men to the aid of Russia was that it was too absurd to be necessary to answer.³ And would not the Baltic have been frozen for some time after the battle of Eylau on February 8th? Yet Mr. Temperley writes that if after this battle we had sent strong reinforcements we might have struck at the French communications and even have fought a successful rearguard action with the main French army.⁴

After Friedland came the amazing Peace of Tilsit. The story may be doubtful, inasmuch as it rests on the unsupported statement of Bignon,⁵ that the first thing Alexander I. said to Napoleon on their first meeting in

¹ Life, II., 273.

² *ib.*, II., 275.

³ Parl. Deb., IX., 1034, July 31st, 1807.

⁴ Life of Canning, 71.

⁵ VI., 302.

the middle of the river Niemen, was, " I hate the English as much as you do ; I will second you in all you undertake against them " ; but the story was based on probability. Yet this was an ally to whom it was said we ought to have given permission to raise a loan of six millions in London, or to have granted a liberal subsidy. Had we not spent enough in loans or subsidies to bolster up these undeserving Continental despotisms, that we must continue to place our wealth at their disposal for the easier waging of unnecessary wars ? Were we to be, as Windham justly asked, " merely the great bank of Europe, on which the different nations were empowered to draw in defence of their own existence ? " ¹ As for diversions on the coasts of Holland and France, for which the Russians pestered us all that winter, had not Pitt's experiments in that direction been warning enough against a renewal of them ?

In any case the Peace of Tilsit marked a wonderful reconciliation between the French and Russians. The world was astonished at the friendly meetings between Alexander and Napoleon on the raft in the middle of the river Niemen ; at their dinings and ridings together, with the King of Prussia uncomfortably in their rear ; at the fraternisation of the officers, and their exchanges of uniforms. But the world was disgusted as well as astonished. Wilson wrote bitterly of the ease with which Alexander became Napoleon's friend—Alexander, whom less than a month before he had heard denounce Napoleon at a public dinner as a madman and a tyrant.² But that was the cant of the day, and friendship between monarchs is seldom sincere. On a later occasion, when Alexander pleaded his friendship for the King of Prussia as an obstacle to his annexing a part of Prussia, Napoleon retorted : " Friendship ! Amongst us there are no friends."³ As was only too well to be proved in their own particular case.

¹ Parl. Deb., IX., 1038, July 31st, 1807.

² Life, II., 282.

³ *ib.*, II., 322.

The Treaty of Tilsit that resulted from the sudden Franco-Russian fraternisation was signed on July 7th, 1807, and added to the world's astonishment.

To Prussia, as Alexander's ally, and at his entreaty, were restored Pomerania, Silesia, and sundry other territories; but Russian Poland was transferred to the King of Saxony as the Duchy of Warsaw, with a military road through Prussian territory to connect Saxony with Warsaw. Prussian provinces on the left of the Elbe were transferred to Jerome Bonaparte as King of Westphalia. Dantzic, formerly Prussian, was placed under the protection of the Kings of Prussia and Saxony, and made again independent, but conditionally on the freedom from all tolls of the navigation of the Vistula. The effect of the Treaty of Tilsit and of the separate Franco-Prussian Treaty of July 19th,¹ was that Prussia lost more than four millions of her population, nearly half of the whole; this and a crushing war contribution were a heavy price for her militarist adventure.

The Treaty of Tilsit was intended to lead to a general peace. Napoleon was to mediate between Russia and Turkey, and Alexander was to mediate between France and England, provided England accepted his mediation within a month of the ratification of the treaty.²

Never was there a better occasion for such a peace. To General Savary, sent after Tilsit as French ambassador to St. Petersburg, Napoleon wrote in his instructions: "I have just concluded peace; they tell me I have done wrong and that I shall repent it; but we have had enough of war."³

The "*Correspondance de Napoléon*," his letters to Alexander and others, throw interesting light on the secret schemes of the two Emperors. On July 3rd he sent the Czar the proposed treaty divided into five heads, to the first of which was appended a treaty of alliance

¹ *Ann. Reg.*, 1807, 714-8.

² *ib.*, 1807, 720-4.

³ Savary, *Memoirs*, III., 96-7.

regarding the manner of Alexander's mediation with England and of his own with Turkey ; to be kept secret whilst it seemed best to them.¹

The original of this secret treaty of alliance disappeared in 1815, and only became public property when Tatistcheff unearthed it from the Russian archives and published it in the appendix to his work on " Alexandre I. et Napoléon " in 1891.² But Bignon's summary of its contents was certainly based on correct knowledge of it.³ It bound each ally to the fullest military and naval support of the other, and pledged each against a separate peace. If England refused Russia's mediation, or had not by November 1st consented to make peace on the basis of the recognition of the equality and perfect independence of all flags on the sea, and of the restitution of all colonial conquests made since 1805, the Czar was to declare his intention of making common cause with France and withdraw his ambassador from London some time after December 1st. On the other hand, in the event of acceptance, Hanover was to be restored in return for the restored colonies. But, in the event of refusal, Denmark, Sweden and Portugal were to be summoned to close their ports against England, withdraw their ambassadors, and to declare war, subject otherwise to being treated as enemies by the two Emperors. Forcible insistence was to be used to bring Austria to co-operate in the same way. But not a word about the forcible seizure of the Danish fleet.

Alexander next day, July 4th, thanking Napoleon for the treaty, only put in a humble word on behalf of his unhappy Prussian ally,⁴ to which Napoleon replied the same day by a long note regarding their alliance. In this he objected strongly to the idea of his brother Jerome being made King of Saxony and Warsaw. He expressed his fear of custom-house quarrels developing into hos-

¹ XV., 381. No. 12846.

² 615-9.

³ VI., 322.

⁴ Tatistcheff, 163.

tilities if the frontiers of France and Russia were continuous. This alleged aspirant to universal empire did not wish his personal influence to extend east of the Elbe, and so proposed to make a buffer State of the territory between the Elbe and the Niemen for the better avoidance of those pin-pricks (*coups d'épingle*) which were so often the prelude to wars between nations.¹

But his proposals in this letter about Prussian boundaries not being to the Czar's liking, Napoleon made others, which the Czar accepted; as he did also the definitive project of the treaty, to which Napoleon had added some fresh articles calculated to constrain England to accept the proffered olive-branch. He hoped that the Czar's influence would have the desired effect, with the alternative of commercial exclusion from the whole Continent. If the overture were rejected, hostilities were to be threatened. He thought that December 1st would be a better date than November 1st for their commencement, as a period of five months would give more time for the first heat of England to cool down.²

Subsequent history throws much interest on the fact that, but for Alexander's intercession at this period, Prussia would have ceased to have any existence, Napoleon's idea having been to dethrone Frederick William III. and to make his own brother Jerome Bonaparte king in his stead. French history would have been very different, possibly happier, had not Napoleon yielded to the softer side of his nature in order to please Alexander.

On July 9th, he sent a note suggesting the form that Alexander's offer of mediation should take to the English Foreign Minister, Canning. It was to be pointed out that England's accession to the peace was one of the essential articles of the treaty; and the Czar was to offer to support the execution of the stipulations with all the forces of Russia; a guarantee which would enable George III. to

¹ Corresp., XV., 382, No. 12849.

² *ib.*, XV., 392, No. 12865.

ratify without mistrust his humane and pacific sentiments.¹ And accordingly this proposal was made on August 1st to Canning by Alopeus, the Russian Minister in London.²

CANNING AND COPENHAGEN

It was unfortunate that this overture came after a letter from Russia of June 30th, strongly reproaching England for her inefficiency as an ally ;³ also after Canning had committed himself to the coercion of Denmark, which destroyed all chance of peace.

George III. was often made to expatiate on his wonderful moderation and forbearance in dealing with weaker Powers. Possibly the hypocrisy was rather his minister's than his own. As an instance of this moderation had been his dealing with the Porte in February of this year, when, at Russia's instigation, and to compel the Turks to peace, a squadron under Sir John Duckworth had forced the Dardanelles and come within striking distance of Constantinople. All that was asked for peace was the surrender of the Turkish warships, twelve of the line and nine frigates, and naval stores or provisions ; failing the acceptance of these friendly and moderate terms Constantinople would be bombarded ! And bombarded it would have been but for the resistance organised by the French ambassador, General Sebastiani, who had started life as a monk ; nor was it without loss and much danger that the expedition found its way back through the Dardanelles to safety.

The same forbearing moderation was shown to Denmark. Lord St. Vincent said that on July 19th the fleet received its orders for the Copenhagen expedition.⁴ Canning sent Francis Jackson, a diplomat of thirty-five, as his messenger of peace, with a fleet of twenty-seven ships

¹ *ib.*, XV., 400, 1, No. 12884.

² Parl. Deb., X., 113.

³ Parl. Deb., X., 112.

⁴ Parl. Deb., X., 379. February 8th, 1808.

of the line and 20,000 men to enforce it. Lord Cathcart's proclamation on landing in Zealand requested "in the most amicable manner" the merely temporary deposit of the Danish fleet: "we ask deposit—we have not looked to capture"; otherwise the Danes were threatened with the horrors of a besieged and bombarded city, and were to hold themselves responsible for the consequent bloodshed. Many words were spent, where the more familiar formula, "Your navy or your city," would have been enough.

Jackson, arriving at Copenhagen on August 7th, had an interview with Count Bernstorff, the Danish Minister, whom his proposals threw into "paroxysms of passion" and whose "anger quite got the better of him."¹ The Prince Regent of Denmark said that history did not contain a more odious act of aggression than his uncle George's, and that the pirates of Barbary were more honourable than the British Government. But Jackson thought otherwise: if the Danes, "contrary to reason and common-sense, persisted in incurring the evils of war," the responsibility rested with them. On August 16th his belief was that "the Danes must be lashed a little before they would give in."²

In consequence of this policy towards Denmark, Canning did not answer the Franco-Russian peace offer of August 1st till August 5th, and then to the effect that the acceptance of the Russian mediation must be conditional on the disclosure of those secret articles made at Tilsit, the very fact of whose secrecy obviously made their divulgence by Alexander impossible without a breach of faith on his part with Napoleon. He also asked, with more reason, for a more explicit statement of those equitable terms on which France professed herself as willing to treat.

The "lashing a little" of the Danes, that Jackson anticipated, took the form of a bombardment for three

¹ Diaries, II., 191.

² *ib.*, II., 199.

nights and days of the town of Copenhagen, in which 1,800 houses and the cathedral were destroyed and many people were killed (September 2-5th).

Lord Chancellor Eldon, dining at the Admiralty on Saturday, September 19th, with several generals and admirals just returned from Copenhagen, was told how "in one street our mortars destroyed 500 persons, principally poor helpless women and children." It made the good Chancellor's heart ache and his blood run cold to hear the accounts these gentlemen gave.¹ George Jackson, the younger brother of Francis by fifteen years, had the luck to see the beginning of the bombardment on his way back from Memel to England. He told his mother that he could not describe the appalling effect the sight had on him, and, being still young, he concluded sentimentally, "Alas, poor Danes! I could not but feel for them."² He also described Lord Cathcart as "loth to fulfil his instructions"; "the idea of burning a capital city . . . and shedding much innocent blood seemed to weigh more heavily on his mind than on others"; the admirals thinking every moment lost that the bombardment was delayed.³ The glare of the conflagration made broad daylight at sea even at the distance of five miles. Francis Jackson's verdict on one of the worst acts in history was that the Danes had "behaved towards us in a dastardly manner!"⁴ Our action seemed to him one of saintly innocence.

On September 25th, 1807, a Declaration, purporting to be Royal, was issued, justifying to Europe the cruel necessity which had driven poor George III. to an action which all Europe thought piratical.⁵ Francis Jackson, of all people, modestly boasted on September 26th that he had had "some share" in the framing of this royal absurdity.⁶ Thus is history handed down to posterity; most

¹ Twiss' Life of Eldon, II., 59.

² Diaries, III., 210.

³ *ib.*, II., 211.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 218.

⁵ Parl. Deb., X., 115.

⁶ Jackson's Diaries, II., 220.

of it as valueless as the war propaganda of all belligerents. And it is quite clear that till October 2nd our Government was undecided as to holding Zealand permanently ; the King of Sweden offered 20,000 men to help us to hold it, and Jackson favoured the scheme.¹

CANNING'S DEFENCE.

In the subsequent Parliamentary debates on the negotiation, the Franco-Russian proposals do not appear to have become matter of general knowledge. It is curious that whilst Canning and his eulogists have always supported his seizure of the Danish fleet on his alleged knowledge of the secret articles of Tilsit, Lord Leveson Gower, our Minister at St. Petersburg, writing to the Russian Foreign Minister as late as *September 24th*, said that "*the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit are still unknown to the Court of London.*"² The day after Lord Leveson Gower wrote of such knowledge as absolutely lacking, the Royal Declaration of September 25th, justified the King's piratical act against Denmark on the ground of "the most positive information" of Napoleon's intention to seize the Danish marine for the invasion of Great Britain ! So the secret articles were both known and unknown after Copenhagen had been ruined because of them !

But might not a peace have been made on the basis of what we now know to have been its proposals ? The restitution of the colonies we had conquered since 1805, besides leaving us Malta, would have involved us in a lesser surrender of our conquests than we actually made at the final peace ; for this, and for our acceptance of the existing European settlement, and for such concessions of our maritime rights as we made fifty years later in 1856 at the Peace of Paris, peace was to be had, and was well worth having ; if for no other reason, because it would

¹ *ib.*, II., 221-4.

² *Parl. Deb.*, X., 212.

have saved us our five years' quarrel with America, which in 1812 resulted in a war of two years' duration.

Rumour supplied the place of knowledge with regard to the secret articles ; but even rumour did not reach to an intended seizure by France of the Danish fleet. On July 15th, several days before it is pretended that any information of the articles had reached Canning, Francis Jackson wrote of himself as " positively assured that Bonaparte had sent eventual orders to Denmark to shut the Sound against us ; " ¹ to the alarm of naval circles. On July 16th Francis Jackson thought there was " some exaggeration in the views attributed to the Danes," though he thought we must vindicate at any sacrifice the rights they " seemed inclined to contest." ² But of no rumour did he seem aware of a French seizure of their fleet. It was not until July 31st, that Napoleon instructed Talleyrand to send a complaint to Denmark of keeping up her correspondence with England ; she was to be asked her intentions, if England refused to make a reasonable peace ; she was to be told that in that event all European ports were to be closed against England, and war declared upon her by the Continental Powers ; if England refused mediation, Denmark must then choose between war with England and war with France. ³ Denmark was thus placed between the devil and the sea.

Napoleon prepared for the eventuality of war against Denmark. On August 2nd he instructed Bernadotte, as Governor of the Hanseatic towns, to make military dispositions with that object and to inform him of the opposition Denmark could make. If Denmark did not declare war on England, on a refusal of mediation, his intention was to declare it on Denmark, and it would be Bernadotte's duty to occupy all Continental Denmark. But not a hint about the seizure of the Danish fleet. ⁴ And

¹ Diaries, II., 173.

² *ib.*, II., 186-7.

³ Corresp., XV., 459, 60, No. 12962.

⁴ *ib.*, XV., 467, No. 12974.

till that date he still thought an English acceptance of the mediation not impossible.

But he was soon undeceived by our proceedings against Denmark, whom only peace could have saved from one aggressor or the other. On hearing of Denmark's declaration of war against England his first thought was for the safety from English capture of Danish ships in Toulon, Genoa, Leghorn, or Venice. Fouché's unauthentic Memoirs describe the rage into which our Danish expedition threw him, nor is there reason to doubt that this slamming of the door in the face of the desired peace caused him much vexation. On August 26th he wrote to the Czar: he was impatient to know what his ally would do for Denmark's aid and for forcing Sweden into common action for the independence of the Baltic. He wished Alexander to persuade Austria to close her ports against us; he hoped for the expulsion of all English ministers from the Continent and for the arrest of English individuals.¹

Although there is no evidence either in the Tilsit treaty itself nor in Napoleon's letters of any contemplated seizure of the Danish fleet, the eventuality of hostilities between France and Denmark might have resulted in the addition of the Danish ships of war to those of France. But that contingency would have been averted by a general peace. The interesting question is, how could Canning on July 19th, when the fleet received its orders for the Danish expedition, have been informed of a French design to seize the Danish fleet? For, in default of such information, the disclosure at a later date of an intention to force Denmark into a Continental League would be no justification of naval operations as a preferable alternative to treating for peace.

Much mystery still attaches to the story of information of a French intention to seize the Danish fleet reaching Canning. Did it come from an informant

¹ *ib.*, XV., 553, Nos. 13078-9.

whose name the Government was justified in not stating, from regard to his personal safety? Alison says that the names of the persons who gave the information were laid before Parliament in 1817, when their deaths had removed them from danger.¹ But in that case it is very odd that Stapleton, Canning's secretary and biographer, in his "Life of Canning," published so late as 1859, should not have mentioned these names, but referred to *a person* (not persons) who, hidden behind a curtain in a tent at Tilsit overheard Napoleon propose and Alexander consent to the seizure by the French of the Danish fleet, and whose information thereof carried immediate conviction to Canning's mind (125). It is to the last degree inconceivable that Stapleton should have published so unlikely a story without Canning's authority for it. Dr. Holland Rose is justly sceptical of the hidden spy story, and suggests that the mysterious informant was a Mr. Mackenzie, an English agent of uncertain functions, who, two days before the first interview on the raft, after a courteous reception by the defeated General Benningsen, dined with that hero, and may have learnt from him the design against Denmark.² But Benningsen is not likely to have been in the councils of the two Emperors, and it seems a fatal objection to the Mackenzie theory that he did not reach England till July 23rd—two days after Canning had acted on his information!³ For it was on July 22nd that Canning sent his secret despatch to Brooke Taylor, whom he sent to take Garlike's place as our ambassador at Copenhagen, referring in it to intelligence received the day before (July 21st), direct from Tilsit, of a proposal by Napoleon to Alexander of a maritime League against England, to which Denmark's accession was both certain and essential. It seems certain that it was this intelligence, not any letter of despatch of an

¹ VI., 491.

² Napoleon I., II., 140. English Historical Review, XVI., 713-8.

³ Temperley's Canning, 93. Malmesbury's Letters, 27.

earlier date, which mainly influenced our Foreign Minister.

The story comes from Malmesbury¹ that the information reached Canning from the Prince Regent of Portugal, and Bell in his "Life of Canning," in 1846 speaks of the first intimation of Napoleon's wicked design as having been made by the Prince of Wales to the Duke of Portland in Carlton House in the month of May, two months before the treaty of Tilsit was signed ; the Prince deriving his information from the Prince Regent of Portugal !²

The mystery therefore remains unsolved. No despatches can have left Memel before the 27th of June ; for George Jackson, who was there, says that a furious hurricane prevented anything from leaving Memel on the 25th and 26th.³ Not till July 4th did he hear that a messenger had been sent from Tilsit to London with a view to negotiation.⁴ But that was hardly information of a kind to make an attack on Denmark imperative. Probably the information was only of the usual alarmist unverifiable type, as is indicated in a letter to George Jackson from his brother Francis, who had been Canning's instrument in the Copenhagen iniquity : " The question of the accuracy of our information is one which I have nothing to do with."⁵ But what chiefly throws suspicion on the whole story is Lord Malmesbury's statement that as early as May, 1807, our Ministers had undoubted information that Napoleon meant to invade our north-eastern coast with the Danish fleet.⁶ One may guess that the suspicion or apprehension of such a design produced the story.

But what is generally ignored by the eulogists of Canning regarding these secret articles is that the scheme about Denmark and Portugal was an alternative to the peace between all the belligerent Powers which Napoleon

¹ IV., 391.

² 238.

³ Diaries, II., 157.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 161.

⁵ *ib.*, II., 229.

⁶ Diary, IV., 391.

and Alexander primarily desired. The biographers of Canning—Bell in 1846, Stapleton in 1859, Marriott in 1903, and Temperley in 1905—calmly ignore this fact altogether. The charge against Canning is that he never gave any serious thought to this better possibility, but acted in haste on information of uncertain value. Napier speaks of “the utter unfitness of Canning to conduct great affairs”;¹ and his failure even to treat of peace, and his putting everything on the hazard of war was a foretaste of a political incapacity for which the country paid daily whilst Canning remained at the head of the Foreign Office.

At this juncture, had he consented to treat, and a peace resulted, no question of the Danish ports or fleet need have disturbed his nerves at all. Even Dr. Holland Rose admits that Alexander and Napoleon both desired peace, in this reflecting the general wish of all classes in France to have done with the war, as reported by Lucchesini in 1806.² Had peace been accepted, not only would there have been no seizure by us of the Danish fleet, with its consequential war with Denmark and Russia, but there would have been no Peninsular war; for the French motive for acquiring the ports and fleets of Spain and Portugal would have been removed. That Portugal placed all her hopes on a general peace as her only escape from the French menace is proved by Lord Strangford, our Minister at Lisbon, who, on August 19th wrote: “The Portuguese Ministers place all their hopes of being able to ward off this terrible blow in the certainty which they entertain of England being obliged to enter into negotiations for a general peace. . . . The very existence of the Portuguese monarchy depends on the celerity with which England shall meet the pacific intentions of the Emperor of Russia.”

Unhappily war was preferred, and the Peninsula was turned into an earthly hell for many years. Who was responsible for this fatal choice? Canning, on the face of

¹ *ib.*, III., 268.

² Napoleon I., II., 138.

the matter, must bear the blame ; but a careful writer like Joyneville, in his " Life of Alexander," declares that both Canning and the Prince of Wales favoured a peace on the lines proposed by France and Russia, but that " nothing could overcome the repugnance of the aged George III. to conclude any peace with Imperial France."¹ And this consorts with probability, as regards at least the King.

Whitbread, on whom had fallen the pacifist mantle of Fox, attacked vigorously on February 29th, 1808, the failure of Canning to negotiate a peace, so clearly desired both by Alexander and Napoleon. There was " a cold, formal, and repulsive note " in Canning's replies to the Russian overtures ; too much " suspicion, petulance, and half-confidence " in his despatches. The desire of the country for peace was proved, he said, by the great number of petitions to Parliament to put an end to the war ; but the " personal hatred " of Napoleon was " as if each man had a personal quarrel with him," and it was this feeling, reflected in Canning's diplomacy, that made peace impossible. In England people only saw Napoleon as a great conqueror ; nor was caution, of course, inadvisable in treating with him ; but Napoleon's chief interest was in the great material works he was conducting for the improvement of France—her canals, harbours, bridges, and so forth. There was truth in Talleyrand's letter to Lord Lauderdale, of October 1st, 1806, that " the power of France had only been increased by the reiterated efforts to oppress her."² It was Pitt and George III. who really made Napoleon an Emperor ; George III.'s refusal to recognise him as such was a pitiful policy ; if the French preferred his rule to that of a Bourbon it was their concern, not ours ; and that the French did so prefer it is proved by the fact that despite the oppression of his prisons and conscriptions they adored him.

¹ II., 14.

² Parl. Deb., VIII., 202.

But we won what we wanted: a fleet of eighteen Danish ships of the line and fifteen frigates were at last in October carried off to England; nor was the loot of £960,000 in value unwelcome as prize-money to the victorious troops. And when the expedition started 350 Danish ships with cargoes worth two millions were seized in British harbours. One can understand that the Prince Regent of Denmark did not accept his uncle George's tender forbearance quite as eagerly as the English war party, which thought the episode a great feather in Canning's cap.

Although Admiral Gambier was made Lord Gambier, Lord Cathcart Viscount Cathcart, and three others became baronets for their part in this adventure, and although Parliamentary majorities supported Canning, the verdict of posterity supports the adverse criticism of Whitbread, Windham, Lord Grey, and other statesmen. One thing was never answered. The British fleet received its orders for Copenhagen on July 19th; if the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit justified the expedition, why was such insistence made at St. Petersburg to extort them from the Russian Ministers from September 2nd to October 7th, when the Czar flatly refused to reveal them, on the hypothesis that the British Government knew them all the time? And how get over Lord Leveson Gower's admission that on September 24th, some time after Copenhagen lay in ruins, the secret articles were still unknown in London?

The absurdity of the whole episode is shown by the real worthlessness of the Danish ships to either France or England. Of the eighteen ships of the line that we took, only four were less than ten years old.¹ "Strange indeed," was the comment of Dean Pellew, son of the Admiral, "that all this blood-guiltiness should have been incurred by our government for the sake of some old rotten ships."²

¹ Ann. Reg., 1807, 697.

² Sidmouth's Life, II., 484.

Napoleon certainly hoped for a time when, if the war continued, a combined continental navy might challenge our maritime supremacy with some chance of success, but such a time lay in a dim distance. At the actual moment was any combination possible that justified a real alarm? Trafalgar had reduced the French fleet to a very low figure: Napoleon, writing to Admiral Decrès, on July 8th, 1807, expressed a wish for his whole fleet to be collected at Toulon: the six then at Cadiz, the six at Brest, the six at Rochefort, the six at Toulon, including frigates. In the same letter he wished to know whether there would be anchorage for ten Russian warships at Brest, L'Orient, or Toulon, and for ten other warships at Cadiz; he counted on a combined Franco-Russian fleet of forty.¹ Lord Mulgrave put the Russian war fleet at that time at thirteen.² Francis Jackson on September 1st, 1807, said that the whole Swedish navy amounted only to seven sail of the line and nine frigates.³ Both Lord Mulgrave and Lord Wellesley calculated that forty ships might have been added to those of France; but if to these were added the Danish ships and the nine Portuguese, how could such a combination have endangered a maritime supremacy which rested on 240 ships of the line and nearly 1,100 lesser vessels?⁴ Even with deduction from this vast superiority of the ships needed for service in the Mediterranean, the Pacific, or the Atlantic, it is difficult to see wherein the danger lay. It is true that Napoleon, in a letter to Admiral Decrès, dated April 12th, 1808, expressed the hope that in 1809 he would have a French fleet of sixty-four battleships, which, added to twelve Russian, twenty-five Spanish, and ten Dutch, would make a total of 111;⁵ but such danger as might have arisen from so considerable a force would have been averted altogether by a peace made in August, 1807.

¹ Corresp., XV., 297. No. 12878.

² Parl. Deb., X., 381.

³ Diaries, II., 206.

⁴ Alison, VII., 674, 814.

⁵ Corresp., XVI., 493, No. 13738.

Of far more importance to us than the seizure of the Danish fleet was the surrender to Admiral Russell on September 5th of the Danish Island of Heligoland ; of immense value to us at that time, commented the Admiral, as the key to the rivers Ems, Weser, Jade, Elbe, and Eyder, and capable, at slight cost, of being made " a little Gibraltar."¹

The Copenhagen affair was, of course, highly displeasing to Napoleon and Alexander, though a powerful party in Russia rejoiced in it. The Czar's sudden friendship for Napoleon was far from being shared by Russian society, which showed its strong anti-French leanings by its systematic " cutting " of the unfortunate Savary, sent as French ambassador after Tilsit. But it was the Czar's mind which counted, and he at once declared his infinite concern at the treatment of Denmark, and at no intimation of it having been given to him by the British Ministry.² Alexander told Lord Hutchinson in an interview on September 4th " in the most peremptory language, tone, and manner, that he would have satisfaction, complete satisfaction, for this unprovoked aggression," He closed the conversation " by repeating with much emphasis, that he would have satisfaction for Denmark."³ Lord Hutchinson thought that the fact of Russia's having two fleets at sea and therefore in danger from our ships accounted for no immediate breach taking place ; but the arrival on November 8th of a demand from Napoleon for an immediate execution of the secret articles of Tilsit resulted next day in more vigorous action. Lord Leveson Gower was ordered to leave, and the Russian mission was recalled from London ; there should henceforward " be no relations between the two countries ; " all previous treaties were annulled, especially that of 1801 ; the principles of the Armed Neutrality were reasserted ; and satisfaction to Denmark declared a condition of peace. Yet the British war party professed to believe that the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1807, 686.

² Parl. Deb., X., 211.

³ *ib.*, X., 353.

attack on Denmark had nothing to do with the war which thus began between Russia and England !

Napoleon made a last effort for peace. Through Prince Starhemberg, the Austrian ambassador, Austria again offered her mediation on November 20th, and was so far encouraged by Canning's reply of November 23rd as to propose on January 1st, 1808, the immediate sending of British envoys to Paris for the opening of negotiations. Canning, however, hedged round his consent to treat with such reservations and couched his reply in such bitter language on January 8th, that on January 12th, 1808, Starhemberg and his embassy were recalled from London.¹ Professions of peace, subject to conditions which easily averted it, served George III. through a long reign to cloak his habitual will to war. Where Fox would have made peace Canning prolonged war ; it was the difference between the Liberal and the Tory mind ; between a conciliatory and a bellicose foreign policy.

Thus the year which had begun under so bright an omen as the capture on New Year's Day of the island of Curaçoa from the Dutch went out ingloriously. It had been remarkable for its failures ; that against Constantinople in February ; the failure to seize Egypt in March and April, ending, after heavy loss, with the evacuation of Alexandria on September 23rd ; the disastrous campaign of General Whitelock against Buenos Ayres in the summer. Ever since Sir Hugh Popham's expedition of 1806, so great was the longing in England for the new markets of the vast province of Buenos Ayres that the Whig Government had been compelled in the autumn of 1806 to organise new plans on a vaster scale for the conquest and annexation of this Spanish colony. It was mainly owing to the wild hopes held out by such a conquest that all chances and offers of peace were rejected. And when General Whitelock was defeated with great loss in an attempt to take the city of Buenos Ayres by assault, and was forced to

¹ Parl. Deb., X, 116-8.

surrender the fortress of Monte Video, and to evacuate South America altogether, the disappointment knew no bounds. After a trial of seven weeks the General was found guilty on every charge, and was cashiered.

To our war with France Canning had thus added a war with Russia and with Denmark, which on October 16th made an offensive and defensive alliance with Napoleon, whilst Napoleon added Tuscany and Flushing to the French dominions. The war had assumed more and more of a maritime nature. Our declaration in May, 1806, of several hundred miles of the French coast in a state of blockade was condemned even by Alison as unusual and unwise. In retaliation Napoleon published the Berlin Decree of November 21st, and other decrees to shut out our trade from as many Continental ports as he could control. In August, 1807, it was demanded of Portugal to close her ports against England, to arrest all English residents, and to confiscate all English property. The ultimate, if reluctant, compliance of the Prince Regent with these demands on November 8th, threatened a rupture with England, but the approach of the French forces under Junot put to flight the House of Braganza, which Napoleon had declared dethroned. The British squadron off the Tagus fired a cheering salute of guns as the whole royal family in the Portuguese fleet of some thirty-six sail made their mournful escape to Brazil just before Junot made his unopposed entrance into Lisbon with a reduced and half-starving force of 1,500 men.

To the French blockade and exclusion of our commerce from the continent we replied with a number of Orders in Council, which, no less than Napoleon's decrees, paid scant regard to the rights of neutrals. Neither side cared a groat for the law of nations.

But America was one of the neutrals, and a most regrettable incident occurred in June which was to bear war fruit after five years of bickering. The Captain of the *Chesapeake* frigate refused to have his vessel searched

for deserters by our *Leopard*. After an action, in which eighteen men on the *Chesapeake* were wounded and three killed, her captain submitted, and four deserters were taken away. Whereupon President Jefferson on July 2nd closed all American ports against the British navy, and demanded satisfaction. Our Orders in Council, forbidding all neutral trade with countries not at amity with us, might be fair as against France, but why should American trade be swept from the Mediterranean in consequence? In December Congress suspended trade and intercourse with both belligerents, and war was barely averted.

These evils and the subsequent Peninsular war were the result of our refusal to treat with France and Russia for a general peace after Tilsit, when there was no evidence to show that a peace, honourable for all, might not have been effected. Yet many historians have praised Canning's policy as crowned with success and of great benefit to his country.

Napoleon was clearly disappointed at the failure of the Tilsit arrangement to produce a peace. On December 7th, 1807, he ended a letter to the Czar with the remark, "We shall get the better of England, we shall pacify the world, and the peace of Tilsit will prove, I hope, a new epoch in the annals of the world."¹ But this hope unhappily was doomed to disappointment.

¹ Corresp., XVI., 187.

CHAPTER VII

1808. War in the Peninsula

THE Treaty of Tilsit was not many months old before difficulties arose between Alexander and his French ally. The peace had made Alexander so unpopular in Russia that in August, 1807, there was a military plot to take his life. Marshal Soult, learning the fact from some Russian prisoners, informed the Czar of his danger, who, in a conversation with General Savary, said that the one thing that troubled him was General Benningsen, for he was, in a sense, a traitor and capable of heading a party against him.¹ Soult afterwards told Lord Holland that Benningsen was engaged in such a plot,² but if Benningsen, who had been so prominent an actor in the murder of Paul, escaped from a similar deed of foul play against the son, the incident reveals the strong feeling against a Czar who had effected a peace for which there was so little to show. Napoleon should have made the alliance a national rather than a personal one by some territorial concession that would have gratified Russian ambition.

There were the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, which Alexander had agreed at Tilsit to evacuate. On October 14th, 1807, came an enquiry from Paris: Why were the Russian troops still there? On account of difficulties with the Turks about the Armistice was Alexander's reply to Napoleon on November 15th, 1807. Napoleon, whilst preferring the literal execution of the treaty, would consent to Alexander's retention of those provinces for compensation to himself at the expense of Prussia. The idea of further sacrifices from his friend,

¹ Tatitscheff, 198.

² Foreign Reminiscences, 185.

the King of Prussia, horrified Alexander, who wrestled for months on the subject, first with Savary, and after December 17th, 1807, with Caulaincourt, Savary's successor at the Russian Court. On January 14th, 1808, the French Foreign Minister, Champagny, wrote to Caulaincourt to say that Napoleon would, for friendship's sake, leave Alexander in the Danubian principalities, but at the price of Silesia as compensation. Alexander fought against this as unfair to Prussia, and as bringing France into too close neighbourhood with Russia.

Matters were in this promising state for a new quarrel when Parliament met on January 21st, 1808, and both Houses carried without a division a vote of thanks for the Regent's address, approving the Government's rejection of the Russian mediation and of its proposed vigorous prosecution of hostilities. The war had become popular. As the mover of the address, Lord Hamilton said our commerce had flourished, our wealth had increased, our possessions had multiplied ; war, the curse of every other nation, had been to Great Britain a comparative blessing ; and only by its continuance could the advantages derived from it be maintained.¹ The few critical voices did little to disturb the general harmony.

The effect of this debate was to put new and more grandiose ideas into Napoleon's head, and to start him on a fresh negotiation with Alexander. He wrote to the latter on February 2nd a letter which rejoiced the heart of the Czar : Alexander would have seen how the British Parliament had decided to carry on the war to the bitter end ; peace called for measures on a vast scale ; Alexander should increase his Army, and extend his frontiers at the expense of Sweden, without the least fear of French jealousy. An army of 50,000 French and Russians, with perhaps some Austrians, should march by Constantinople into Asia, where, once arrived on the Euphrates, they would cause England to

¹ Parl. Deb., X., 38.

tremble, and their menace to India would make her submit. All might be signed and settled by March 15th, and by May 1st, the French might be in Asia and the Russians at Stockholm. "Your Majesty and I," he went on, "would have preferred the charm of peace and the passing of our lives in the midst of our vast empires, engaged in giving them life and happiness by the arts and benefits of government; the enemies of the world will not have it. We must be more great, in spite of ourselves. It is wisdom and policy to obey destiny and to follow the guidance of irresistible events. Then this cloud of pigmies . . . will yield and will follow the movement we shall have given them, and the Russian people will rejoice in the glory, the riches, and the fortune which will be the result of these great events . . . The work of Tilsit will regulate the destinies of the world. Perhaps on your Majesty's part and mine some pusillanimity led us to prefer a certain and present good to a better and more perfect state; but since England will not have it, let us recognise that the time has arrived for great changes and great events."¹

On the same date he wrote in the same strain to Caulaincourt, who was to tell Alexander and Romanzov that he was not far from an idea of an expedition to India and of a partition of Turkey; that nothing was easier than an expedition of some 25,000 Russians, 10,000 Austrians, and 40,000 French into Asia and thence into India. But the partition of Turkey was a necessary preliminary, and for that he and the Czar must have a personal interview. He was animated by no timid policy, but by the sole desire of giving peace to the world by the preponderance of France and Russia, etc. There need no longer be any question of Alexander's evacuating the Principalities nor of the French evacuating Prussia.²

The perusal of this letter threw the Czar into a sort of ecstasy. Leave to retain the Principalities would reconcile him to his subjects, who would have looked on their

¹ Corresp., XVI., 498-9.

² Tatitscheff, 309-11.

evacuation as the loss of a Russian province. His imagination quickly took fire from that of his friend. At Tilsit he had regarded the Indian idea as quixotic ; now he fell in with it, and looked on India as England's most vulnerable point.¹

Endless discussions ensued during March between Caulaincourt and Romanzov, or with the Czar, about the partition of Turkey. At Tilsit the Imperial friends had stopped short at the driving of the Turks back into Asia, with only Constantinople and Roumelia left to them in Europe ; Russia taking her provinces north of the Danube, and France annexing Albania, the Morea, and Candia. But now ambitions took a wider sweep. France was to have the Greek Isles, Cyprus, Rhodes, Syria, Egypt and Salonika ; whilst Austria, a buffer between Russia and France, was to have Servia and a slice of Macedonia ; Russia, of course, was to have Constantinople. But what was Constantinople without the Dardenelles, which France insisted on as part of her share ? On this rock the negotiations were for the time wrecked, a final agreement being wisely deferred to a personal interview between the two Emperors.² If this cutting-up of Turkey with no more compunction than the cutting-up of a cake seems morally censurable, Alexander must share in all the blame bestowed upon Napoleon ; but the world had so long given itself up to the government of men no more restrained by moral principles than the captains of brigands that both Napoleon and Alexander may fairly claim an acquittal for acting on the predatory system which the long acceptance of the rule of force had established in the world. It was an agreed thing that national self-interest took precedence of any other motive ; and this was spoken of as " the new morality."

Unforeseen events caused the larger partition to miscarry : though, considering the anarchy then raging in Turkey and the later troubles of the Turkish question,

¹ *ib.*, 319.

² Tatitscheff, 307-78.

such miscarriage was probably a misfortune for Europe. But Alexander was suffered to keep his Turkish provinces, nor did he lose time in carrying out that part of the programme which related to Sweden. On February 21st, he declared war on Sweden; early in March Finland was declared part of Russia, and on May 10th, Alexander sent the good news to Napoleon that the fall of Sweaborg on May 3rd had completed the conquest of that province. Early in October the Czar wrote to Napoleon to inform him of the peace of Friedricshavn and its terms: Sweden forced to adhere to the Continental system, to close its ports against all English vessels, and to cede to Russia Finland and the Aland Islands. This, he added, would justify to the Russians their alliance with France; and if France had the same success with Austria, the two allies could then turn their joint efforts against England, and so bring about that general peace which all desired.¹

But in the meantime events had happened in the Spanish Peninsula which were fated to have a disturbing and finally a dissolving influence on these ingenious and sanguine plans for the pacification of the world.

Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal was destined to break the spell of his power. In August, 1806, the Russian ambassador at Madrid had made with the Spanish and Portuguese Courts a secret agreement by which the Court of Spain, when the French armies were far enough away on their march for the Prussian campaign, was to begin a war with France on the Pyrenees, and to invite English aid. When Napoleon learnt this fact from his ambassador at Madrid, he kept his anger in reserve; as also when on the evening after the battle of Jena he read the proclamation of October, 1806, by the Spanish favourite and Minister Godoy (called from his share in the Peace of Basle of 1795, the "Prince of the Peace") summoning the Spaniards to prepare for war. For the time the only consequence was the call for a large

¹ Tatitscheff, 504.

Spanish force to take its share in the campaign on the Baltic.

The ultimate consequence was the Peninsular war. Spain and Portugal could no longer be trusted as tributary allies ; from the French point of view an alliance between France and Spain could only be secure which attached each country to the same family. A Bonaparte on the Spanish throne seemed as desirable to Napoleon as a Bourbon had seemed to Louis XIV. The steps by which this was effected evoked a storm of moral indignation ; and Canning, who had robbed the Danes of their fleet and bombarded Copenhagen, waxed eloquent on the " perfidy " and " villainy " of Napoleon. On October 27th, 1807, Napoleon made a treaty with Charles IV. of Spain for the partitioning of Portugal ; and Junot was sent with an army to seize the fortresses of Lisbon and the fleet of ten sail of the line before the English could anticipate him.

Napoleon's instructions to Junot on November 12th, 1807, for his conduct in Portugal were in somewhat remarkable contrast with his general orders to make the invaded country pay for the keep of the invader. Junot was to give rise to no complaints ; to give an example of the purest disinterestedness ; he was to behave well, as Napoleon would himself ; and to practise the greatest incorruptibility (*pureté*) ; for a fortune nobly earned was better than one acquired by illicit and shameful methods ; if there was little military glory to be won in Portugal, let him acquire that of an honest and blameless administrator.¹ How far Junot followed this advice is another matter.

There was something like a race between France and England for the seizure of the Portuguese fleet. On October 22nd, 1807, we made a convention of mutual alliance with Portugal ; but Sir Sidney Smith was sent to blockade the mouth of the Tagus, and he was instructed by Canning on November 6th to make his blockade more

¹ Corresp., XVI., 157, No. 13351.

rigorous, unless the Regent of Portugal ratified the Convention and refused to close the ports. The blockade was only to cease on surrender of the Portuguese fleet, which would be restored after the war; and every Portuguese ship was to be seized or destroyed.¹ We intended, as Charles Bagot wrote to Lord Fitzharris, on August 26th, 1807, "immediately to play the same game at Lisbon that we are now playing at Copenhagen,"² Between Napoleon's orders to Portugal to close her ports against us, to confiscate all British property, and to seize all British subjects before September 1st, and our own threats if she did close her ports, our unhappy ally was placed in a most uncomfortable dilemma.

The intrigues and infamies of the Spanish Court played into Napoleon's hands. The French had already taken Barcelona and the Spanish garrisons when, on March 19th, 1808, the news of the intended emigration of the Spanish royal family caused a riot at Aranjuez, which frightened Charles IV. into abdicating in favour of his son, Ferdinand, the Prince of the Asturias. Murat, or the Duke of Berg, was then on his way to Madrid, which he occupied on March 23rd, two days before the Prince entered the city as Ferdinand VII. Such had been the misgovernment in Spain that Napoleon expected the people to accept Murat gladly as their deliverer. The imprisonment of the Prince of the Peace, after barely escaping with his life, on March 19th, gave such general delight that some 600 monks danced wildly in the streets of Salamanca, and the church bells rang for joy.

Napoleon was puzzled how to act. He wrote on March 29th to Murat: "The events of the 19th March have singularly complicated our affairs. I am in the greatest perplexity. . . I have no wish to use violence towards that family (the royal); it is never expedient to render oneself odious, and inflame hatred. . . Consistently with the interests of my empire I can do infinite good to

¹ Temperley's *Canning*, 80.

² *Malmesbury's Letters*, 39.

Spain. What are the means of attaining that object? Should I advance to Madrid and assume the rights of a protector by declaring for the father against the son? . . . Do not commit me to meet with Ferdinand in Spain unless you deem it expedient for me to recognise him as King of Spain. Above all, take care that the Spaniards do not suspect what part I am about to adopt; you can have no difficulty in doing so, for I have not fixed on one myself. . . . If war breaks out, all is lost."

Napoleon anticipated little trouble. Writing from Bayonne on April 13th, 1808, to Caulaincourt, his ambassador in Russia, he said: "I hope not to be kept here long"; and, alluding to the increasing troubles: "I hope soon to be free of all that."¹ Events rather governed him than were governed by him. The quarrel between Charles IV. and his son Ferdinand was not of his making, though the abdication he enforced from both in his own favour at Bayonne on May 4th, was made all the easier by the unfortunate discord between father and son. It was the tumult in Madrid on May 2nd, suppressed by Murat with great severity, which set the heather alight. Napoleon himself had not failed in using "every method he could devise for conciliating the favour of the Spaniards."² But the executions in Madrid set the greater part of Spain aflame for the expulsion of the foreigner.

It little availed, therefore, that on May 6th, Murat issued a proclamation promising that the Spanish monarchy should be preserved; that the country should not be dismembered by so much as a village, nor be subjected to contributions. The spirit of patriotism had been roused, nor was it abated by the not illiberal Constitution issued with the approval of the Assembly of Spanish Notables at Bayonne on July 7th, when Joseph Bonaparte was raised from being King of Naples to be King of Spain. Many weeks earlier both Charles IV. and Ferdinand VII

¹ Vandal, *Napoléon et Alexandre I. III.*, 557.

² *Ann. Reg.*, 1808, 161.

both of whom had been made to abdicate on May 5th, were removed far into France; but would either of them have ever granted a Constitution on lines so liberal as those of the new plan? In the Cortes the twenty-five nobles and twenty-five ecclesiastics would have been outnumbered by the 100 deputies of the popular choice; forty of whom were to be eligible by the provinces and fifteen by the chief cities. In addition, twenty Colonial deputies were to represent the several colonies in the Cortes. One single civil code was to take the place of all separate jurisdictions, nor could anyone be arrested without lawful warrant.¹ Was it likely that any Bourbon king would have provided better for Spanish liberty?

How little Napoleon foresaw the future is shown by another letter to Caulaincourt, dated June 15th. He thought Spain was settled by the recognition and proclamation of Joseph; "I do not keep a village for myself; the Cortes are maintained with all their rights."²

The enthusiasm in England for the Spanish insurgents fully responded to the martial enthusiasm of Spain, stained though the insurrection was by the most barbarous murders. For not only were the French massacred, as the 300 French merchants who had taken refuge in the citadel of Valencia on June 5th, at the instigation of Calvo, a canon of Madrid, but the Spanish commander, Fernando Saavedra, and the Spanish governor of Badajoz, and Solano, governor of Cadiz, and Count d'Aguila, a chief magistrate in Seville, were among the victims of the savagery of the mob. It was like the early years of the French Revolution over again.

It sufficed for popular sympathy that the Spaniards had risen against the French, and although no definite treaty with Spain was signed till January 14th, 1809, promising our utmost assistance to Ferdinand VII., one of the most worthless of the House of Bourbon,³ Spain

¹ Ann. Reg., 1808. 326-31.

² Vandal, III., 561.

³ Parl. Deb., XIII., 809.

became virtually our ally whilst still technically our enemy. Many years of military training had produced in England a military ardour which was deaf to all counsels of reflection. The Duke of Norfolk was almost alone in asking for more definite knowledge of the aims of Spain before committing ourselves too deeply to her cause. Even Sheridan, so long a counsellor of peace, was now strong for war. Since the revolution began, he said, there had never been such an opportunity for striking a blow "for the rescue of the world"; till then British Ministers had pursued a petty policy, gone about filching sugar islands and neglecting all that was dignified; henceforth we should stand up for "the salvation of the world."¹ Only Windham had the courage to throw what Lord Castlereagh called "worse than cold water upon the hopes of the retrieval of Europe."²

Accordingly the readiest promises of assistance were made on June 12th, to the deputies that came from Asturias; peace with Spain was proclaimed on July 4th; and we were in the whirlpool of a new war, which was to be fought no longer on our own element but on land, and of which only a very distant end was visible.

In accordance with this spirit of martial ardour, from June to the end of the year we lavished on the Peninsula £3,100,000; more than 23,000,000 cartridges, 16,000 hats and bonnets, with other equipments in proportion, and immense sums were raised by private subscription.

Murat left Madrid on his way to Naples, where he was to take the place of Joseph Bonaparte, now elevated to the throne of Spain; and Napoleon sent Savary to Madrid to act as Viceroy instead of Murat, with a caution to be wise and moderate, and to observe the strictest discipline. "For God's sake permit no pillage," he wrote: a counsel easier to give than to observe.

From the tangled mass of military operations that ensued the bravery and frequent success of the Spanish

¹ Parl. Deb., XI., 888.

² *ib.*, XI., 897, June 15th, 1808.

peasant forces was a conspicuous and surprising feature. The first siege of Saragossa lasted from mid-June to mid-August, and ended with the retirement of the French forces. But the defeat of the Spaniards by Bessières at Rio Seco on July 15th, was so decisive as to lead Napoleon to think the rising so far suppressed as to make it safe for Joseph to go to Madrid whilst he himself left Bayonne for Paris. Joseph entered Madrid on July 21st, his Ministry consisting mainly of the former Ministers of the exiled Ferdinand. But his stay was only short; for after the defeat of General Dupont at Baylen on July 19th, flight seemed the wiser course, and on July 30th, King Joseph and the French evacuated Madrid and retired to the north of Spain. The victory at Baylen surprised the world; it divested the French of their reputation of invincibility. On August 5th and 23rd Napoleon expressed his extreme annoyance at a defeat which, he said, was an extraordinary act of folly and stupidity on the part of Dupont, and one which compromised all his plans.¹ "Dupont," he wrote, "has utterly disgraced himself, and dishonoured my arms."² But the capitulation of 20,000 French as prisoners of war on condition of being sent by sea to France was only less amazing than the atrocious Spanish violation of the condition. Instead of being sent to France some 18,000 men were consigned by the Junta of Seville to a slavery worse than death on the Spanish hulks at Cadiz—one of the blackest incidents of the war. Poor Dupont, though allowed to return to France, was there court-martialled and condemned to be shot,³ though his sentence was commuted at the instance of Napoleon.

It is possible that this defeat at Baylen encouraged Austria in her thoughts of a fresh war with France; for at this time Napoleon's letters show increasing anxiety in that direction. He writes of having had to place all the troops of the Rhine Confederation on a war footing so

¹ Vandal, III., 565, 567.

³ Ann. Reg., 1808, 213.

² New Letters of Napoleon, by Lady Mary Lloyd, 101.

that he might be able to march against Austria with 200,000 men ; but if the Czar would only speak a strong word to Vienna and promise 100,000 men, in the event of Austria's attacking him, he would release those troops. He was beginning to be mistrustful of the Russian support that had been agreed upon.¹

Meantime the infection of war spread rapidly from Spain to Portugal ; the rising that began on June 18th soon drove the French from northern Portugal. Sir Arthur Wellesley (Wellington) landed at Corunna on July 20th with 100,000 men in aid of Portugal ; hearing there of the Spanish defeat at Rio Seco, he offered military aid to the Junta of Galicia, only to have the offer thrown back in his face with the answer that money and arms, not men, were all that was wanted from the British Government. In Portugal, on August 21st, he won so decisive a victory over Junot's army at Vimiera that Junot offered to capitulate, and on August 30th was signed the famous Convention of Cintra, which caused such indignation in England that many papers would not print the terms, or put themselves into mourning to do so. It was galling to think that the French troops were not only not made prisoners of war but were to be embarked for France in English ships and at English cost, with their artillery and horses, military chest and private property, and be free to serve again after landing in France. On the other hand the French were to evacuate the fortresses and the whole of Portugal² ; and as the liberation of Portugal was the great thing, public opinion ended by coinciding with Wellington's, that consent to the Convention was the best course in the circumstances. But the military Board of Inquiry came to a lame conclusion, which, whilst deprecating any further proceedings, eulogised Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir Harry Burrard, and Sir Arthur Wellesley for the lustre that their zeal and firmness had reflected on

¹ Vandal, III., 567, August 23rd.

² Ann. Reg., 1808. II., 267-70.

His Majesty's arms.¹ The Portuguese ambassador actually demanded compensation from us for the Convention, to Canning's not unnatural indignation. But in those days the fleeing of Great Britain seems to have been widely regarded as the chief reason for her existence.

The war manifested itself with more than usual frightfulness. Atrocities always come as surprises in every fresh war, and each enemy accuses the other of degenerating from some supposed past noble standard of "good" warfare. When the pursuing French took Rio Seco, they sacked and plundered it "with merciless severity, and all the nuns in convents, etc."² At the sack of Cordova by the French "every public establishment was sacked, every private house plundered. Armed and unarmed men were slaughtered indiscriminately; the churches plundered; even the venerable cathedral . . . stripped of its riches and ornaments, and defiled by the vilest debauchery." The general Dupont and the superior officers set an example in rapacity, Dupont realising £100,000 from the plunder.³ The churches were turned into stables.⁴ When Joseph Bonaparte retired from Madrid to Burgos, all the villages on the way were pillaged, and many burnt. When 10,000 Portuguese peasants and 4,000 Spanish soldiers were overcome in the town of Evora, there was an indiscriminate massacre, in which "neither age nor sex was spared." History lends no countenance to the idea, so often revived, that modern war is far more civilised than war in pagan times. War itself is the great atrocity, of which particular atrocities are but the inseparable accidents.

So long as the Grand Army, 200,000 strong, were in the north and west of Germany, Napoleon had little reason to fear the latent hostility of Austria; but the diversion of large French forces to Spain altered the situation. Austria forthwith raised a large army by conscription, and otherwise made warlike preparations, for which

¹ *ib.*, II., 272-7. ² Alison, VI., 719. ³ *ib.*, VI., 723. ⁴ Ann. Reg., 1808, 199.

Napoleon demanded explanations. The explanations, as usual, pleaded the needs of self-defence ; and pacific assurances were interchanged, of which each understood the worthlessness.

But Napoleon had neither motive nor wish to have another Austrian war on his hands ; and to avert this, if possible, was one of the reasons for his famous conference with the Czar at Erfurt in Prussia, which lasted for a fortnight from September 27th. But the original motive was a settlement of Turkish affairs ; Napoleon thinking wisely that two men in fifteen days might settle what otherwise might take three years for thirty couriers and thirty conferences to settle.¹ He wanted a conference unhampered by such preliminary conditions as Romanzov asked for ; the Eastern question was already on the world, and he ended his letter of May 31st from Bayonne with the significant words : “ The foundation of the great question is always Constantinople : Who shall have Constantinople ? ”²

It is conceivable that, had Austria been invited to the Erfurt meeting, her recognition of Joseph as King of Spain might have kept the peace of Europe : for Metternich on August 25th in an interview with Napoleon had promised such recognition. For there seems no reason to doubt that a sincere wish to settle such a general peace was the main motive for the meeting. The two Emperors signed a secret treaty on August 12th, by which, in consideration for compliance with his policy in the Peninsula, Napoleon allowed Alexander a free hand as regarded Finland and the Turkish Principalities. And with a further view to conciliate Prussia, Napoleon so far acceded to Alexander's solicitations for Prussia as to reduce greatly her war contribution and to withdraw all French forces from Prussia, except from the fortresses of Stettin, Custrin and Glogau. Early in December the Prussian King and Queen returned from Russia to their

¹ Vandal, III., 557.

² *ib.* III., 561.

delighted subjects in Berlin, there to dream of future revenge.

In accordance with their desire to effect a general peace, Alexander and Napoleon signed a joint letter on October 12th to George III., pleading for his consent to a peace.¹ Champagny wrote on the same day to Canning : " The *uti possidetis*, as formerly desired by England ; or any other basis founded on justice was offered, and England should choose the meeting-place of the plenipotentiaries."

That an equally strong wish for peace prevailed in England, though insufficiently represented in the Tory-Jingo Parliament of the time, is shown by the Letter of Miles to the Prince of Wales on April 12th, 1808. He spoke of our existence as a nation as in jeopardy, with no other avenue to salvation save by peace.² He was sure that a direct overture to France to that effect would be well received, and was in any case an experiment worth trying.³ His advice to the Prince, whom he begged to cease to be a cypher in the country, was as follows : " Leave to France the task of arranging the Continent of Europe, of which she is become the absolute mistress ; her claim, the right of conquest. It is precisely the same as that we have to Oude, or to any other of the Asiatic provinces we have seized or made tributary." ⁴ But peace is seldom popular in the quarter to which Miles made his vain appeal.

Here the question arises, whether, with this widespread desire for peace, the war should not have been ended in this autumn of 1808. Undoubtedly it should ; for there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the two Emperors in wishing to bring England into a general pacification. Where then was the hitch ? In Canning, the Foreign Minister, who, as a disciple of Pitt, could not rise above an overstrained mistrust and was eager to try again the system of coalitions and subsidies

¹ Ann. Reg., 1808, 351.

² 88.

³ 108.

⁴ 109.

which had failed so often before. English emissaries had been working for some time on the war party in Austria to re-enter the war ; for clearly, if peace was not to be the alternative to continuing the war for the liberation of Spain, the best military policy for England was to divert Napoleon's energies from ourselves to Austria ; and, though the Archduke Charles opposed the venture, the Emperor and the nobility and large masses of the Austrian people inclined strongly towards it.

It was not difficult to reject the overture. Canning replied on October 28th in a letter of studied offensiveness. He professed a difficulty in answering the two Emperors without admitting a title in one of them " which His Majesty never had acknowledged ;" nor could he act without the consent of our Swedish ally, or without the inclusion in the negotiation of the Junta that acted for Ferdinand VII.

Insult was naturally answered by insult. Alexander gave great offence by refusing to admit to a Peace Congress the plenipotentiaries of " the Spanish *insurgents*." But though he had himself recognised Joseph as King, he saw no reason why a difference of opinion about the Spaniards need prevent or delay the opening of a Congress, and he renewed the original offer of negotiation on November 28th.

But Canning, persistent in the opinion that the offer was merely a French trick to delay our sending help to Spain, stuck to the condition about Spain which destroyed all chance of peace. And on December 15th he published for George III. a defence of his conduct, expressing great indignation at the Spaniards being called " insurgents," and asking how a negotiation could have been begun which involved the abandonment of a brave and loyal people. The declaration, of course, regretted the limitations which the King's love of honour placed on his love of peace.¹

¹ Ann. Reg., 1808, 353.

Neither Canning's declaration nor his speech in defence of it on January 31st, 1809, escaped severe criticism. That negotiation did not involve the abandonment of Spain was proved by Alexander's second offer that the Spanish question need not preclude the continuance of negotiations. It would naturally have been one of the subjects for a Peace Congress. And Lord Grenville fairly asked how Napoleon could reasonably be called on to recognise Ferdinand VII., as a preliminary to negotiation, when Ferdinand's position was the main object of dispute. Lord Liverpool (Lord Hawkesbury) admitted the fairness of the original offer; yet Canning's whole action was based on the assumption that the overtures were on the face of them delusive. He had indeed not gone beyond public opinion, which was for the prompt rejection of the overture, but the taunts and sarcasms of his replies to the two Emperors were responsible for those offensive phrases in their rejoinders which proved fatal to peace. Whitbread was probably right, that a more conciliatory reply to the first overture might have had a different result, and that the Ministerial professions of a wish for peace were and had been always insincere.¹ And had peace resulted, we should not have had to lament, as Lord Auckland said, "the useless sacrifice of the finest army that Great Britain had ever sent into the field," in allusion to Sir John Moore's retreat to Corunna.²

But the real reason why the Canning Ministry would not treat for peace was sufficiently betrayed in the Royal Declaration of December 15th. They had every hope of their inducements to Austria to resume hostilities proving successful: "The delusive prospect of a peace between England and France" might relax the preparations of any nation which might be balancing "between the certain ruin of a prolonged inactivity and the contingent danger of an effort to save themselves from that ruin." It was thought better to gamble once more

¹ Parl. Deb., XII., 167-9, 210-40.

² *ib.*, XII., I, 4.

with the lives of Englishmen on a chance that had always failed than even to attempt to settle a peace. The events of the next year were to show the criminal futility of the decision that was taken.

Meantime, Napoleon, having secured peace with Russia and so indirectly with Austria, hastened himself to Spain, where by early November he found himself at the head of forces, drawn from all quarters, of over 300,000 men. By the decisive defeats of the Spanish forces during November at Espinosa, Burgos and Tudela, the way was cleared for Napoleon's advance to the capital. With its capitulation on December 4th Joseph was re-instated in his new kingdom ; and so little difference does it make to the greater number of mankind under what rule they live, and so little do they often care, that within a short time the re-opened shops and theatres indicated the return of life to its normal note of gay indifference. Great reforms were introduced. Above all, the Inquisition was abolished : its funds and those of one half of the estates of the suppressed convents, one-third in number, went to the reduction of the national debt ; feudal rights were abolished, and all commercial restrictions between the different provinces.¹ The Treaty of Tilsit abolished slavery in the new Duchy of Warsaw ; introduced the civil code of France, and gave publicity to judicial procedures ; and so in the new kingdom of Westphalia the new constitution did away with serfage, feudal privileges and abuses.² It was this tendency to liberal reforms that not only explains the facility and extent of the French victories but also the bitter opposition to Napoleon by so many of the monarchical and aristocratic governments of Europe. In their battle with him their real battle was against reform.

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 731-3.

² Bignon, VI., 370-2.

CHAPTER VIII

1809. Austria's Fourth Defeat

THE first six months of the Peninsular War had brought great disillusion. The same Press, which before Austerlitz had treated the downfall of Napoleon as a certainty,¹ had led people to believe that Spain could put 400,000 men into the field with a reserve of a million more; and experience had shown that she could do nothing of the sort. Her enthusiasm too for the war proved equally fictitious. Letters from our generals in the autumn of 1808 found that the patriotic spirit of June had wholly subsided. Sir John Moore wrote on November 27th, 1808, to Frere, our ambassador at Madrid, that he found no enthusiasm in the people; that they would suffer so few as a dozen French cavalymen to exact contributions from the villages without the least opposition. And from Salamanca he wrote on December 10th: "I have little hope of the success of the Spanish cause; for I see no marks anywhere of enthusiasm or a determined spirit, either amongst the people or the government."²

Frere's unfortunate persistence in the contrary opinion tempted Sir John Moore to that advance from Salamanca towards Madrid with only 26,000 men, which, Madrid being then in French occupation, necessitated his distressful retreat to Corunna. The 250 miles were with great suffering accomplished on January 13th, 1809, and then came the battle of Corunna, wherein, though the French were defeated, the heroic commander of the British Army lost his life. On April 21st, 1809,

¹ Parl. Deb., XIV., 146.

² *ib.*, XIV., 11.

as many as thirty-nine peers against ninety-two voted with Lord Grey that 7,000 men had been "sacrificed without advantage in enterprise, without plan, combination, or foresight, and equally ill-timed and mis-directed"¹ and posterity supports the minority. But the martial mind can draw glory even from adversity, as when Canning said after Corunna: "If we had been obliged to quit Spain, we had left that country with fresh laurels blooming on our brows." During the war both sides must have worn on their brows whole groves of "blooming laurels."

The public interest in the war had by this time been much overshadowed by the scandal connected with the Duke of York and his mistress, Mrs. Clarke, in connection with the sale of commissions. So much was this the case that on March 13th, 1809, Francis Jackson wrote to his brother that, if half a dozen Spains had been lost and half-a-dozen armies with them, no thought would have been given to it, and Spain's past, present, and future were quite forgotten.²

As the name of Sir John Moore is celebrated for its connection with one of the most famous episodes in our military history, so it is with one of the most ludicrous. When the Portland Tory Government came into power in April, 1807, one of the first things they did was to increase the subsidy to Sweden as well as to Prussia; and a subsidiary treaty on February 18th, 1808, entitled the King of Sweden to £100,000 a month.³ Gustavus Adolphus IV. was half crazy in his fanaticism for war. In May, 1808, Sir John Moore was sent to Sweden with 11,000 men, with the object, as Lord Liverpool said on June 18th, 1813, "to co-operate with Sweden in the conquest of Norway as a compensation for the loss of Finland,"⁴ but his troops were not allowed to land at Gothenburg. Proceeding to Stockholm he found the

¹ *ib.*, XIV., 150.

² *Diaries*, II., 419, 421.

³ *Parl. Deb.*, X., 1054.

⁴ *Parl. Deb.*, XXVI., 722.

king bent on the most impossible schemes of conquest, and, being ordered not to leave the capital, it was only in disguise that he was able to effect his escape from an ally we had so heavily subsidised. In 1809, Gustavus, for cashiering a bodyguard of 4,000 young Swedes, who had refused to attack 12,000 Russians, was arrested by some of his nobles on March 13th, and his uncle, Charles XIII., was in May made King in his place. The uncle's address to Sweden on March 15th, 1809, shows that the main reason for the dethronement of Gustavus was his ineradicable love for war.¹ At, and after, Tilsit, he obstinately refused all proposals of peace, and by continuing at war with France became at war with Russia and Denmark, to the great detriment of Sweden and her final loss of Finland to Russia. If, instead of encouraging this mad-cap King, Canning had insisted on his making peace, Charles XIII., the uncle, might not have found himself on September 17th, 1809, obliged to sign a treaty with Russia that annexed Finland and Aland and other Russian conquests finally to Russia, and compelled him to close his ports against us.² A good result perhaps for Finland; for the Russian autocrat gave her liberal institutions, and soon made himself as popular as any of the old Swedish Kings had ever been before him.

Whilst Sweden thus passed from a useless ally to an open enemy to England, Turkey was cajoled back to friendly relations; and the treaty with her of January 5th, 1809, to some extent defeated Napoleon's exclusion of our commerce from Continental ports by opening a passage for it through the Dardanelles up the Danube into Central Europe.

We had reached a turning point in the war. To stop or continue it, especially in the Peninsula; that was the question. Alison thought that but for "the constancy of the aristocratic party" the Peninsular

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 746-8.

² Ann. Reg., 1809, 784-9.

war would have been extinguished by the withdrawal of our troops.¹ A large public opinion, ably led by Lord Grey and Grenville in the Lords, and by Whitbread and Ponsonby in the Commons, dissented from the aristocratic party, whose militarist fervour always rose with its rising rent-roll. But, though the war ended with ultimate success, no statesman who could have only foreseen such success at the close of six more years of war, with all the cost of life and treasure involved in it, could have wished not to have done with it then and there. We had rescued Portugal, our constant ally, from the French; but what did we owe to Spain, so frequently and recently our enemy, that, deceived by false representations of her military strength and ardour, we should have entered into a quixotic crusade for her defence against France? History had moved in a strange circle; a hundred years before we had been fighting the war of the Grand Alliance to prevent a Bourbon from sitting on the throne of Spain, and now everything was to be risked for the sake of placing one there. History often suggests the reflection that the moon exercises the same sort of influence over nations that is claimed for it over individuals. Public opinion seems to have its tides like the sea.

Why not have left Spain alone? Even the rule of Joseph would have benefited Spain far better than the rule of Ferdinand VII. could ever do. And the better part of the Spanish nation showed a preference for Joseph. The heads of 28,000 families at Madrid signed their names as favourable to his government, and a similar spirit was manifested by many responsible political bodies in the country.²

In these circumstances even Canning, at that time in his Tory-Jingo stage of life, might have hesitated to commit this country to a war in the middle of Spain, with forces inevitably far inferior numerically to the

¹ VII., 662.

² Ann. Reg., 1809, 419. Alison, VII., 691.

French, but for the fatal reliance that his party placed on that singularly unsuccessful Emperor, Francis II. Napoleon said of Francis that he was always of the opinion of the last man he had spoken with ; and therefore his personal pacific leanings were at the mercy of his Foreign Minister, Count Stadion, and others of the Austrian war party, opposed though that party was by the Archduke Charles. The Treaty of Presburg indeed bound Austria to peace, but what of a treaty if a chance offered of reconquering the Tyrol and other lost dominions ? The news of the Spanish rising seemed to offer such a chance, and immediately in June, 1808, a most oppressive conscription had been decreed in Austria. The renewed alliance between Napoleon and Alexander, at Erfurt, prompted to immediate caution, but the clear intention of Austria to break the peace was the main motive of the British Government's refusal of the peace offer made after Erfurt, as admitted in the Royal Declaration of December 15th, 1808. It was resolved in England to risk all on the off-chance of an Austrian victory over France.

It is rather obscure to what extent English instigation urged Austria to this perilous course. Alison writes of amicable relations as established with Austria in 1808, and of a promise of subsidies ;¹ but Canning denied all responsibility for Austria's action. "The communications with the Austrian Government were few and precarious, and in none of these communications was any specific promise of assistance held out to her. It was indeed stated to her that if she was likely to be engaged in an inevitable contest there would be a disposition to assist her ; but that that disposition would be greatly limited by the circumstances of the times."² And, though the Government "did not discourage Austria from making an effort which she deemed necessary to her own honour and safety, it could not

¹ VII., 246.

² Parl. Deb. XIV., 541, May 12th, 1809.

be said to offer any counsels that could commit itself to the undertaking."¹ Ponsonby, rather simply, took this as meaning that we had "no concern whatever in advising Austria to engage in the present war."²

In any case England at the time had a great interest in engaging Austria in war with France; namely, to divert Napoleon from the west. And the new war had that effect, as admitted repeatedly by Napoleon in his letters to Caulaincourt in St. Petersburg. On January 7th, 1809, he wrote that but for his alliance with Russia, he would have already been in Austria with 200,000 men, and he wanted his Russian ally, whom he was beginning with reason to mistrust, to give him the stipulated aid by diplomacy or by arms to keep Austria at peace. "We should perhaps have had peace but for the hopes the English had founded on the dispositions of Austria." It was these Austrian armaments, he complained, which had prevented him from forming a camp at Boulogne for our disquiet, and from embarking 20,000 men on his Toulon squadron for some expedition against Egypt or Syria.³ England, he said, had been much alarmed by the march of his divisions to Boulogne, and Austria had rendered her an essential service by obliging him to countermand their march. Not only at Boulogne, but at Brest and Toulon he had intended to have camps, wherefrom to have threatened our colonies, but Austria's conduct had prevented him. "If I had at this moment," he wrote, on February 23rd, "80,000 men at Brest, 30,000 at Flushing, 30,000 at Toulon, as I counted on having, England would be in the most sorry position."⁴ These troops on their way to these places he had been forced to send instead to form an observation camp at Strasburg.

Thus, on the assumption of peace being undesirable, there was no doubt of the interest we had in fomenting

¹ *ib.*, XIV., 825, May 31st, 1809.

² *ib.*, XIV., 542.

³ Vandal, III., 574.

⁴ *ib.*, III., 578.

war between Austria and France. And the vexation of Napoleon was the measure of our success in that policy.

His vexation with the Czar for his lukewarmness as an ally was also great. The only chance of keeping the Continent at peace was, he held, by a decided tone and a firm resolution; but the Czar would not speak the strong enough word. As for the provinces of Austria, Napoleon wrote, he wished for none of them for himself; he and the Czar would do with them as seemed best. He leant to dividing Austria into three separate kingdoms: Bohemia, Hungary, and Austria; with these Austrian States and Prussia between France and Russia, Russia need have no fear of France. Such a division he regarded as the likeliest means of pacifying Europe; for this greatest of militarists nursed pacifist hopes, and perceived the danger of the coming militarisation of the world. "We shall then," he said, "be able to diminish the number of our troops, and substitute a small number of regular troops for these general levies which tend to the arming even of women, and thus change the system of large armies which the late King of Prussia introduced. Barracks will become workhouses (*dépôts de mendicité*), and the conscripts will remain farm labourers. Prussia is at that point already; we must do the same by Austria."¹ This at least shows Napoleon's hope for the future on March 6th, 1809; but whatever foundation there was for it was wrecked on the disloyalty of the Czar Alexander, who not long after the Erfurt meeting had sent the young Count Nesselrode as an agent to Talleyrand as a spy to assist the malcontent party in France in the plot he was beginning to weave over Europe for the overthrow of his friend and ally.²

For under the mask of friendship and of frankness Alexander made an easy dupe of Caulaincourt, Napoleon's ambassador at his Court. The early and full extent of the Czar's treachery was not revealed till different

¹ Vandal, III., 581.

² Vandal, III., 43.

Foreign Office archives came to be ransacked and exposed to the world in Vandal's *Napoléon et Alexandre I.* in 1897. His schemes for the overthrow of Napoleon he kept secret even from his Chancellor Romanzov, who was too pacific for his policy. Side by side with his open diplomacy, as expressed by his official ambassadors, he kept up a secret and different diplomacy by unavowed agents; whilst Count Stackelberg was his ostensible ambassador at Vienna, the real agent was Senator Koschelef, through whom information was to reach Alexander without coming through Romanzov;¹ and whilst Prince Kurakin was his official ambassador at Paris, the important minister was the young Count Tchernicheff, who served as his spy to foment feeling against Napoleon.² These intrigues for a coalition against France he carried on by spies in every Court; from 1809 he carried on a direct and indirect correspondence with Talleyrand, already one of the foremost in the defection against the Emperor.³ Alexander never tired of expressions of attachment to the alliance he was burning to break; and the musical tones of his voice as they issued from his smiling lips, to which no smile of the eyes corresponded, both captivated and deceived Caulaincourt. He carried deception so far that with regard to his increasing armaments he told Caulaincourt in January, 1811, that he had not added a bayonet to his forces at the very time when he confided to the Swedish Minister that he had just created thirteen fresh regiments.⁴ Alexander had many virtues, but veracity and loyalty were not the most conspicuous.

It seemed likely that, apart from our aid, Austria would have to stand alone. She had tried in vain to tempt Prussia and Russia into the same venture. Prussia had learnt caution, whilst no enticements from the Austrian ambassador Prince Schwartzenberg at St.

¹ Vandal, III., 37.

² *ib.*, III., 41.

³ *ib.*, III., 25.

⁴ *ib.*, III., 51.

Petersburg could as yet seduce Alexander from his promises to Napoleon. At most he would not act as an enemy. The opportune moment had not come. Alexander so often spoke with two voices that his true mind was rarely known ; but it seems from an intercepted letter from Champagny to Napoleon, dated December 11th, 1808, that he was then genuinely vexed at Austria's refusal to recognise Joseph as King of Spain, and at her determination to form a new Coalition with England, Turkey and the Spanish patriots against France. He predicted disaster, if not ruin, to Austria from such a course.¹ And Napoleon had gone to all lengths, " with an extraordinary degree of earnestness and anxiety " to incline the Austrian Government to remain at peace ; even promising to withdraw his troops from the Silesian garrisons, and to break up his camps in Germany, if they were an object of alarm to Austria.² A letter from Champagny to Andreossi of August 16th, 1808, showed that Napoleon pressed peace on Count Metternich, then Austrian ambassador at Paris, " with a degree of earnestness and emotion that could not well be counterfeited."³ In a letter of March 24th, 1809, to Caulaincourt, whilst still hoping for Russian help, he authorised his ambassador to sign any kind of treaty or convention that might be proposed by the Czar ; " I wish for no aggrandisement ; I only wish for the maritime peace, and Austria armed is an obstacle to this peace."⁴

As soon as Napoleon knew that, if he could not count on Russia's sincere aid, he at least need have no fear of her hostility, the French ambassador was recalled from Vienna, and both sides prepared for a war from which Austria had little reason to hope for clemency if defeated. Austria was bent on war, that is, the military and aristocratic classes, which in Austria as elsewhere were the only classes that counted ; and on April 6th, 1809, she

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 468.

² *ib.*, 174.

³ Ann. Reg., 203.

⁴ Vandal, III., 586.

declared war in a proclamation by the Archduke Charles and by another two days later by the Emperor Francis. The Archduke's manifesto based the justification for war on no specific offence, but on the usual platitudes of a certain victory and a lasting peace.¹ The real justification was the distance of Napoleon, who, however, left Paris for the front on April 13th, only four days after the main Austrian army had begun the war by crossing the Inn into Bavaria. The Tyrol rose against the rule of Bavaria; and in Italy and Bohemia fighting began. But Austria had counted on the revolt of the Rhine Confederacy against the French, and was disappointed. The Archduke wrote to his brother the Emperor, "All the operations of the campaign were based on the probability of an early success, and on the co-operation of the Rhenish Confederacy, which in fact declared against us. Would it not be expedient then to try the result of a negotiation before the enemy has invaded Austria?"² The Emperor consented, but before Napoleon received the Archduke's overtures, events had brought him far on his way to Vienna.

On April 22nd, he had won the battle of Eckmühl; taken Ratisbon, and after the battle of Ebersberg on May 3rd, the road to the capital lay open before the French.

On May 13th, Vienna for the second time capitulated, and the French became possessed of the immense military stores in the arsenal. All this in little more than a month.

Although desperate battles on the Danube at Essling and Aspern, on May 21st and 22nd, retrieved the military honour of Austria, and cost the French about 30,000 casualties and the Austrians 20,587, the campaign was not settled "decisively" in favour of Napoleon till six weeks later by the hard-fought battle of Wagram, on July 5th. It comforted the friends of Austria to say that, had the Archduke John appeared on the field before his brother

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 749.

² Alison, VII., 310.

Charles had left it, the result would have been different ; but history is unaffected by hypothetical arguments. What mattered was that the subsequent armistice and long negotiations ended on October 14th, with the Treaty of Vienna,¹ which forced Austria to yield large territories, numbering three-and-a-half millions of people, to Bavaria, to the Kingdom of Italy, to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and a slice of Galician territory to Russia for her not very friendly neutrality. During the continuance of the maritime war Francis II., was to reduce his army to 150,000 men, and the occupied provinces had to submit to a contribution of £3,400,000. On October 17th, before Napoleon left Vienna for Paris, the beautiful ramparts and fortifications of Vienna were mined and blown up.

When Alexander read the terms of the treaty of Vienna, on October 27th, he was too angry for words. One-and-a-half million Galicians had been added to the Duchy of Warsaw, and only half-a-million transferred to Russia. His chief fear had been lest a French victory should add Galicia to the Duchy of Warsaw with a view to the restoration of an independent Poland, for which he had his own designs ; and, therefore, though he had been willing enough for Austria to get " a good lesson " from the war, he had not wished her to be beaten to her knees. Though he had professed himself as having no more desire for an additional province than for an additional village, he had told Caulaincourt beforehand that at the peace he would not suffer Galicia in whole or in part to pass from Austrian possession.² To ease the mind of his ally, Napoleon, on October 20th, instructed Champagny to inform Count Romanzov that, to prove the sincerity of his having no intentions of restoring Poland, he would have the very name of Poland erased from all official acts. This, and the declaration of Montalivet, French Minister of the Interior, to the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 791-6.

² Tatitscheff, 473.

Legislative Body on December 1st, that whilst the whole of Galicia might have been annexed to the Duchy of Warsaw, only a portion had been so annexed, out of consideration for Alexander, almost the whole of the original partition remaining to Austria, sensibly quieted the Czar's fears for a time.

But for the shortest possible time. No assurances could relieve his mind about Poland. On January 4th, 1810, Caulaincourt and Romanzov signed a Convention to the effect, among other things, that the kingdom of Poland should never be re-established; but when Napoleon learnt that his ambassador had signed this Convention without his approval his annoyance was such that he refused to ratify it. He was ready to promise not to favour or aid any such scheme, but he not unreasonably declined to bind France for all time to put down any movement for the restoration of Poland, especially without any reciprocal obligation on Russia's part towards France. The last despatch on the subject on July 1st, 1810, was expressed in the strongest terms, with no other result than mutual irritation.¹

THE SIDE WARS

OF the side wars that branched out of the main Franco-Austrian war that of most interest broke out in the Tyrol, where, with great vicissitudes of success and defeat, the peasantry under Hofer fought throughout the summer to free themselves from the French and Bavarians. By the tenth article of the Treaty of Vienna, Napoleon promised to secure a complete amnesty for the Tyrolese; but, though Hofer at first counselled acceptance of the proffered amnesty, a useless resistance was renewed and prolonged till December, when most of the Tyrolese leaders submitted, Hofer alone resisting all solicitations of the French generals and after capture being sentenced to be shot; a sentence that should have been remitted to so heroic a soul.

¹ Corresp., XX., 148-161, 16177-81.

Another branch war in the north conducted by the Archduke Ferdinand was attended by such temporary success that the King of Saxony had to retire from his dominions, Dresden and Leipzig being taken; whilst Warsaw, the capital of this Duchy of Warsaw, capitulated to the Austrians, though it was recovered on May 30th, when circumstances compelled the retreat of Ferdinand. Napoleon expressed to Savary his indignation at Alexander's suffering Warsaw to be taken in the presence almost of his army, and the incident was the first rift in a friendship whose continuance afforded the best hope for the pacification of Europe.

The Austrian war had also its effect in Italy. Pius VII. in 1807 had been willing to close his ports against the English, and to suffer French troops a passage through his territories; but to declare war against England he altogether refused. In February, 1808, the French had entered and occupied Rome; and in April the annexation of four of the Papal provinces followed the deprivation of the Pope of his Government, and his virtual imprisonment in the Quirinal. On May 17th, 1809, the annexation of the Papal States to the French Empire was declared, and Rome constituted a free city; nor did the Pope's excommunication of the man he had so lately crowned an Emperor have the effect it might have had in the middle ages. On July 5th the Pope was seized and taken to Grenoble; after which he lived for three years under guard at Savona. Sir John Stuart's expedition with 15,000 men to capture Naples, if possible, coincided with these events; his fleet reached the Bay of Naples on June 24th, 1809, and before the end of the month the Islands of Ischia and Procida had surrendered. Murat meantime had 25,000 men massed in Calabria for an attack on Sicily. It was a great military inconvenience to the French to have an intervening State between North Italy and the Kingdom of Naples; and in those days, when "the new morality" was in fashion in all

countries, military advantage justified anything. The abolition of the Inquisition and the great material improvements in Rome effected under the French afforded some compensation for the conscription and taxation which were the inevitable accompaniments of the new Government.

But these events and strivings in Italy, North Germany, and the Tyrol were of little account compared with the broad fact that for the fourth time Austria had been decisively conquered by France. On the 10th of October, Napoleon wrote to the Czar, hoping that the undeserved moderation he had shown to Austria would be pleasing to His Majesty.¹ But the moderation deprived Austria of 50,000 square miles : Bavaria being enriched by Salzburg and part of Upper Austria ; the Grand Duchy of Warsaw by Western Galicia ; and the French Empire by those districts, called the Illyrian Provinces, which gave it what would now be called a "corridor" all the way to Turkey. Considering all the disasters that followed the resolution of the British Cabinet to refuse the peace overtures after Erfurt, the guilt that must be divided between Canning and the King for not using their influence to keep Austria at peace is very great. On June 20th, 1809, a Vote of Credit of three millions was placed by Parliament at the disposal of the King for the assistance of Austria, Spain and Portugal ;² a small part of which sum paid to Austria to keep at peace could have saved the world from five more years of needless warfare.

Was the hope of further colonial conquests among the motives for continuing the war ? Our maritime supremacy had reached a height which enabled us to capture whatever we had a mind to capture ; and a great rounding-off of outstanding French possessions marked the year 1809. After the capture of Cayenne, Martinique and the city of St. Domingo, the French flag ceased to

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 790.

² Statutes, XLIX., 562.

fly in the West Indies, save at Guadaloupe. France also lost her Senegal settlement, and in the Indian Ocean the Isle de Bourbon. In the Mediterranean, Corfu and the six other Ionian Islands came under British control.

Loudly as we complained of the French lust for fresh territory, were we innocent ourselves of a similar sin? Some Englishmen thought it rather a case of the pot calling the kettle black; as, for instance, Sir Robert Wilson, who had the deadliest hatred for Napoleon and who took a prominent part in the chief events of his day, yet saw the mote in the English eye as clearly as he saw the beam in the French. He complained that English policy had "as great a proneness to power, by the acquisition of all that the world possessed of value as ever frenzied and ruined the Roman Empire."¹ "We are, in fact, resolved upon the possession of all the islands in the world"; though history certified that "the spirit of conquest was the source of the decadence of empires."²

All this had come of a British policy which wavered between encouragement and its opposite. When Austria had failed, and the time came for apology, the King's speech on January 23rd, 1810, defended this policy as follows: "Although the war was undertaken by that Monarch (Francis II.) without encouragement on the part of His Majesty, every effort was made for the assistance of Austria which His Majesty deemed consistent with the due support of his allies, and with the welfare and interest of his own dominions"; which was a roundabout way of saying that we had encouraged and discouraged her at the same time.

And what makes it the more inexcusable that the Duke of Portland's Cabinet not only did not insist on Austria's keeping the peace, but refused to consider the Erfurt overtures for peace, was that his Cabinet, torn

¹ Diary, 37.

² *ib.*, 48.

in twain by internal dissensions, was the least competent to wage war successfully of all the Cabinets we ever had. The position was almost grotesque. Canning, the Foreign Secretary, was scarcely ever in agreement with Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary for War, and in April, 1809, so convinced was he of his lordship's incompetence that he told the Duke of Portland that his own continuance in office must depend on Castlereagh's expulsion from it. The Duke contrived to smooth over the breach for some months, but when Castlereagh discovered that Canning had been sitting amicably with him in the same Cabinet whilst plotting for his removal, he was much incensed, though the fault was not Canning's. The scandal was such that both these discordant spirits resigned, Canning on September 7th and Castlereagh on September 17th. On the 19th, Castlereagh challenged his colleague to a duel, which resulted in a wound in the Foreign Minister's left thigh, and soon afterwards in the resignation of the Duke, whose end, long approaching, and accelerated by these troubles, came on October 30th, five days after the Jubilee day of the fiftieth year of George III.'s reign. Spencer Perceval then succeeded as Prime Minister, with Lord Wellesley in the place of Canning, and Lord Liverpool in that of Castlereagh. But there was little harmony between Perceval and Wellesley. No wonder the enemy rejoiced. On October 10th, Napoleon wrote to the Czar of the condition in England as that of "perfect anarchy."¹ Success in war was hardly probable in such conditions; yet it was a Ministry of such a character which for no consideration would contemplate peace.

But, if Canning was right about Castlereagh's incompetence as a War Minister, what of Canning as Foreign Secretary? The Peninsular War is an everlasting monument to the glory of Wellington, but it is a monument

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 790.

of very much the reverse to those who were responsible for its early stages.

Wellington (Sir A. Wellesley) landed at Lisbon on April 22nd, and having driven Soult from Oporto and Northern Portugal in the middle of May, proceeded to join forces with Cuesta and his Spanish forces on July 22nd, preparatory to a march on Madrid. Together they both defeated the French on July 27th and 28th at *Talavera*.

George Jackson on August 3rd, 1809, summed up the battle as follows: "Nineteen thousand men gloriously repulsed an army of from forty to fifty thousand, but were prevented from following up their victory from want of food; the British troops were starving, and destitute of the commonest necessaries and assistance for their wounded men. The French, therefore, made good their retreat unmolested."¹ The discovery was made that we had overrated the value of our Spanish allies. Jackson says that Wellington spoke "in the highest terms of the cavalry regiments, *El Rey* particularly; which made, he says, a most excellent and well-timed charge," the colonel being promoted on the field. But how can this be reconciled with Wellington's letter to his brother Lord Wellesley on August 2nd, that "whole corps threw down their arms in my presence and saved themselves by flight, although they were neither, attacked nor menaced with an attack, but merely frightened, I believe, by their own fire?" In any case an advance to Madrid seemed unwise with such allies as the Spaniards, and the approach of Soult from the rear made a retreat to Portugal advisable; so that *The Times*, much to Jackson's indignation, questioned whether Talavera ought to be called a victory at all.² Wellington had to leave some 2,000 sick and wounded in hospital at Talavera to the charge of Cuesta. This general, described as "a crusty old gentleman, of undoubted

¹ *Diaries*, II., 472.

² *ib.*, II., 492.

bravery,"¹ led a force which perhaps made crustiness pardonable, but on Cuesta's abandoning Talavera, Wellington had to appeal to Marshal Mortier for the care of the abandoned wounded. Nor did he appeal in vain. "The conduct of the French," wrote Banks on October 5th, 1809, "to our wounded, both officers and men, has been most handsome, and in fact exceeds anything I ever heard of."² And this was borne out by Wellington's despatch of August 30th, 1809.

A bright spot on a dark background; for the sufferings of the Portuguese and Spaniards between the rival enemies were past imagining. To the incredible horrors of the renewed siege of Saragossa, which surrendered to the French on February 20th, or of the siege of Gerona, which surrendered later, must be added the miseries which were the mere incidents of the war. Thus in Soult's retreat from Galicia, not only were the peasantry mercilessly massacred, but their houses were burnt along the whole line of march; in Masséna's march in May, 1811, the villages were invariably burnt, and orders from headquarters condemned the town of Leyria and the convent of Alcobaca to the flames. Peasants found in arms were hanged by Augereau's orders on great gibbets all the way from Gerona to Figueras in May 1810. But it was devilry against devilry. In retaliation for Marshal Ney's treatment of some Spanish prisoners, the Spanish general Barros loudly boasted in Seville of having driven 700 French prisoners into the river Minhol.³

Among these horrors must in fairness be set Sir John Moore's lamentation over the pillagings of his troops on his desperate retreat to Corunna. George Jackson, writing at Seville on March 16th, 1809, gives the evidence he heard on this subject from British officers he met at Lisbon. "The pillage, the scene of

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 183.

² Malmesbury's Letters, II., 147.

³ Lord Wellesley, Parl. Deb., XVI., 382, 3, March 30th, 1810.

disorder, of wanton cruelty, could not, they say, be exaggerated ; for no pen could describe, or imagination conceive the horrors that were perpetrated.”¹ So Wellington wrote of his army on June 17th, 1809, as “excellent on parade, excellent to fight, but worse than an enemy in a country.” When removed from the supervision of their officers the men committed outrages without end on the defenceless inhabitants, who had hailed them as their deliverers.² Such facts give but a feeble idea of the misery caused in the countries to which we professed to be bringing liberty and happiness. We brought them neither. Better by far not have intervened at all than at such a cost, or for such a man as Ferdinand VII. who, when at last restored to his people, immediately restored the Inquisition and annulled all the liberal institutions which in his absence the Cortes had set up for the benefit of Spain.

Talavera taught Wellington that, if Spain was to be delivered, it must be by British valour alone. It was a strange policy to go through fire and water to deliver a country that, if it wished for deliverance, showed no signs of wishing to be indebted to us for it. The failure of the Spaniards to supply the promised provisions reduced Wellington’s army almost to starvation and compelled him to withdraw to the region of Badajoz, where for a month his men died like flies ; two-thirds dying of the 7,000 in hospital. Not least of the obstacles to Wellington’s success in Spain was what Napier calls “the undisguised hatred of the Spanish Government.”³ In the circumstances it was fortunate that Wellington’s expedition into Spain and back to Portugal did not end as Sir John Moore’s had ended the year before ; it seemed to contemporaries “most improvident, his escape most fortunate.”⁴ Deprived of his aid, the insurgents could hope for little success ; their victory

¹ Diaries, II., 394.

³ Peninsular War II., 219.

² Alison, VII., 775.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1809, 195.

over the French on October 24th was followed by a mighty defeat at Ocana on November 19th, where the flight of a cavalry regiment led to such a panic and rout that some 20,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the French. At Alba de Tormes on November 25th, the Spanish cavalry fled without striking a blow on the approach of a French body of horse under Kellermann, and the next day the whole Spanish army took to flight, leaving their artillery and stores, at the entrance into the town of a French patrol. No wonder that at the close of 1809 all the Spanish armies had been dispersed, all the Spanish garrisons had fallen. Into such an alliance had Canning, in response to the popular clamour of 1808, light-heartedly conducted his country, and then tried to throw on Castlereagh the blame of the failure.

The Portland Cabinet was even more unfortunate in North-West Europe than in the Peninsula. As Russia in 1807, so Austria in 1809, blamed us for inefficient assistance. Why had we not created diversions in her favour by landing an army in the Adriatic and co-operating with the Archduke John in Italy, or by aiding in North Germany the insurrectionary movements of Schill and the Duke of Brunswick? Canning justly ridiculed the idea of our landing a force in Trieste and marching through the Tyrol to Swabia; but Sir John Stuart's expedition in June with 15,000 men to South Italy had only been desisted from when the retreat of the Archduke had rendered co-operation with him impossible. As to an expedition to North Germany, what, he asked could have been more inhumane than to encourage a rising we could not permanently support?¹

The Expedition to the Scheldt, to capture or destroy Antwerp, was only partially thought of as a diversion for Austria; it was mainly directed to our own interests. Nor indeed was the military conception of destroying Napoleon's fleets and arsenals a bad one, had the execu-

¹ Parl. Deb., XVI., 330-6.

tion succeeded. For, if there ever could be a question of invasion, it was from Antwerp the danger would come. Before the French Revolution, Antwerp had fallen to so low a state that her trade had almost departed, and grass was growing in its once thriving streets.¹ From this condition Napoleon had raised it to a condition of strength and prosperity which only fell short of his ulterior dreams. He regarded Antwerp as a province in itself. And it was there that he hoped in time to have a respectable navy; the annual Report of the French Empire on November 3rd, 1808, gave ten ships of the line as actually in Antwerp, twelve to have been launched in the year, and twenty-five to be in course of building as well as twenty-five frigates.² Considering that we possessed 242 ships of the line and over 1,000 ships of other sizes³ the Antwerp menace gave no serious cause for quaking, but its removal was a fair military aim, provided it were a fair military possibility.

Lord Grey on January 23rd, 1809, said that such a scheme had often been pressed on the Government of which he, as Lord Howick, had been Foreign Minister in 1807, and always rejected as impracticable.⁴ Ministers were as woefully misinformed about Antwerp as about Spain, and were the ready prey of deceptive hopes. Nor was it easy to catch Napoleon asleep; it was even said that as far back as March he had warned his officers of the plan that was brewing.⁵ So that the expedition, when it started on July 28th, "the greatest," said Lord Liverpool, "that was ever sent from this or any other country upon any occasion,"⁶ thirty-seven ships of the line, 138 minor vessels and transports and 40,000 men, never gave Napoleon a moment's uneasiness. "We are glad," he wrote, "to find the English crowding into the marshes of Zealand; let them be merely kept in

¹ Parl. Deb., XVI., 338.

³ Alison, VII., 674, 814.

⁵ Parl. Deb., XVI., 397.

² Ann. Reg., 1808, 360.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XV., 32.

⁶ Parl. Deb., XVI., 4.

check, and their army will be speedily destroyed by the bad air and the epidemic fevers of that country."¹ This was just what happened. Lord Chatham never got near Antwerp; the bombardment, siege, and capitulation of Flushing involved operations whose protraction by unforeseen causes fifteen days longer than was expected deprived an attack on Antwerp of all hope of success, and after 15,000 men left to garrison Walcheren Island had for the most part perished, that island was completely evacuated on December 23rd: a melancholy ending to a foolish adventure that had cost the country twenty million pounds and a deplorable death-roll.

The Government naturally had to find scapegoats for the blame of so great a disaster. The first was that unfailing scapegoat for all military blunders, the weather; Lord Liverpool put it all down to "difficulties arising from the unusual state of the weather."² But Lord Chatham, the commander, was the chief scapegoat. And he, in a report delivered unconstitutionally to the King directly instead of through the Secretary of State, threw much of the blame on the Admiral, Sir Richard Strachan, who vigorously defended his action in the matter.³ Lord Chatham has always been blamed for not having made an immediate attack on Antwerp, and perhaps captured it by a sudden assault whilst insufficiently defended; but his instructions of July 16th, had given him wide discretion: the destruction of the arsenals and docks at Flushing and the reduction of the Island of Walcheren were quite as much an object as similar operations at Antwerp.⁴ Much and strong military evidence before the Parliamentary Committee supported his defence of his conduct, and he himself persisted in the assertion that Castlereagh's belief in the defencelessness of Antwerp was founded on error.⁵

¹ Ann. Reg., 1809, 780.

² Parl. Deb., XVI., 4.

³ Parl. Deb., XVI., 1105-30.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XV., App. i.

⁵ *ib.*, App. 42, 383, 391.

The press in those days as in our own could always serve as a lightning conductor of public wrath from the Government to some unfortunate general, and Brougham declared in Parliament that most of the charges against Lord Chatham were based on calumnies, and that he had been " basely traduced by the whole of the Press under control of the Government."¹ Lord Castlereagh was primarily responsible for a venture that depended for its success, as regards Antwerp, on that city's being either defenceless or indefensible, and Sir Home Popham, of Buenos Ayres fame, was supposed to have put the idea into Castlereagh's head.² Canning, according to his secretary, gave his sanction, not his approval, to his colleague's scheme.³

There were signs that the country was growing restive under a military oligarchy which could show little but failure in every direction. But in vain Lord Grenville appealed to the patriotism of the Peers to free themselves from a Government " broken, distracted, incompetent, incapable of exerting any energy or of inspiring any confidence."⁴ Even the City of London complained of the " imbecility " of the Cabinet and pressed His Majesty for an inquiry into the Scheldt fiasco, only to receive in reply a curt and snubbing refusal.⁵

¹ Parl. Deb., XVI., 7.

² Ann. Reg., 1809, 225.

³ Stapleton's Canning and his Times, 172.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XV., 22, January 23rd, 1810.

⁵ Ann. Reg., 1809, 590, I.

CHAPTER IX

1810. A Lost Peace Chance

THE repeated failures of the Tory Government produced a widespread desire to change the Government and abandon the Peninsular War. What could be more humiliating, exclaimed Lord Erskine, than to see the Government of a great empire in the hands of men "who seemed not to be fit to be a vestry in a small parish."¹ Lord Moira declared on February 22nd, 1810, that he was speaking the language of 99 per cent. of the whole population of the country, when he asserted that Ministers who, whilst boasting of their power to liberate the Continent, had only brought danger close to our own shores, deserved marked reprobation and exemplary punishment.² Nothing short of a Divine miracle, said Lord Grenville, could enable us to save Portugal.³

Great abuse has been poured on the peace party of the time for their wish to get out of the Peninsular War. Dr. Holland Rose, for instance, complains of the "factious conduct" of their opposition to the Government, and of their "unmanly whinings."⁴ And equally great praise has been lavished on Lord Wellesley, then Foreign Minister, and on Lord Wellington for their determination to continue the war, and for their optimistic forecasts of its success. But the optimism of the brothers, though finally justified by results, was not at the time justified by reason. Lord Grenville and Lord Grey, Ponsonby and Whitbread, were right, by all that balancing of probabilities which is the only guide of

¹ Parl. Deb., XII., 136.

³ *ib.*, XV., 512.

² *ib.*, XV 531.

⁴ Napoleon, II., 209.

statesmen. The prophecies of the optimists had been uniformly falsified; and Whitbread cannot have been singular in being tired of the Parliamentary boastings of the last sixteen years, which, instead of ending in the destruction of France, had only ended in her aggrandisement.¹

Political interest had indeed some good reasons for continuing the Peninsular war. It kept some 300,000 Frenchmen fully occupied far away from our shores; as Perceval put it, the longer we enabled Spain to exhaust the military resources of France, the more we should promote our own interests.² So Lord Liverpool, on March 21st, 1811, expressed the opinion that, "so long as there was a fair prospect of success, it was the policy of this country to avert the battle from its own shores."³ And, of course, if the war had to continue, the French possession of the ports of Spain and Portugal would have been a menace to Ireland. But these arguments presupposed an unnecessary premiss.

The counsel of Probability was against the war party. How was any force we could send likely to drive 300,000 French out of the Peninsula? So overwhelming seemed French supremacy that Napoleon, always as optimistic as Wellington himself, had thought the French victory of Ocana on November 19th, 1809, decisive of the campaign; and subsequent operations had lent fresh countenance to his hopes. Grenada had fallen on January 28th, 1810; on February 1st King Joseph entered Seville, "amidst the acclamations of the populace"; Malaga fell on February 5th, whilst Cadiz had only just been saved by the arrival of reinforcements under Albuquerque, and the result of its siege still hung on the knees of the gods. To continue the war in these conditions was little better than a gambler's chance; for the coming Franco-Russian war could not possibly be foreseen, with its consequent great withdrawals and diminution of the French forces in the Peninsula.

¹ Parl. Deb., XII., 67.

² *ib.*, XVI., 16.

³ *ib.*, XIX., 461.

Nor could Napoleon's mistakes be foreseen ; of which the chief related to his brother King Joseph. The new king had not been long in his palace of the Escorial before a thousand signs convinced him of the popular antagonism to his rule. Two thousand men employed in the royal stables gave up their posts at the same hour, and Joseph was left with a single postilion. But he gradually so improved his position that his rapid success in Andalusia was only less surprising than the reception accorded him. Soult wrote to Berthier on February 10th, that he was received everywhere " with enthusiastic joy." When Sebastiani entered Grenada on January 28th he was greeted by the " universal acclamation of an immense multitude of people. No one fled. All in the public employments of the State, and all men of rank and property, were ardent in their professions of attachment and eager to take an oath of allegiance to King Joseph."¹ And so it was at Seville ; though the sycophancy of all popular acclamations must of course be discounted. Even Joseph began to be cheerful, writing on February 24th, 1810, from Xeres, " Everything here is in the best possible state ; the provinces of Andalusia are pacified, because justice reigns there and I have nothing but praise for the generals."² On March 5th, he wrote to his wife from Malaga, of the " inconceivable enthusiasm " with which he was received everywhere, . . . " the way I have been received here surpasses all imagination ; if I were only allowed free action, this country would soon be happy and quiet."³

But his chances of success were thwarted by his brother, who on February 8th divided the country into military governments, leaving Joseph at the head of an army of only 19,000 men, and depriving him of the government of the provinces, of which Aragon was placed under Kellermann, of whose rapacity Joseph had complained to

¹ Ann. Reg., 1810, 154.

² Du Casse, *Les Rois Frères de Napoléon*, 30.

³ *ib.*, 35.

Napoleon. With an insufficient force and an insufficient purse, Joseph soon found his position most galling. He wrote to his wife on July 16th, "If I am required to govern Spain merely for the benefit of France, that cannot be hoped of me. . . . I have duties of conscience in Spain, and I will never betray them." When he heard that his youngest brother Lucien had been taken prisoner by the English, he said that he envied him, and that he would prefer his lot a thousand times to the humiliating figure to which he was himself reduced. . . . "I have much reason to praise the inhabitants of Madrid and all the Spaniards who know me. The war would soon be finished and Spain pacified if I might have a free hand."¹ Possible as this was, he never got his free hand, and on September 1st, he wrote in his despair, "As to my actual state, I am inclined to any course to get out of it; my soul is degraded, and I would rather have death than this condition."² But our English optimists, ignorant of these things, had no reason to count on Napoleon's thus playing into their hands by the mistaken course he took at this juncture.

Whether King Joseph could have reconciled Spain to his rule is less doubtful than that under no rule of his could Spain have suffered more than she did in the six years between 1814 and 1820, when Ferdinand VII. occupied the recovered Spanish throne. Our infatuation for this most sorry specimen of the Bourbon family was truly extraordinary. This young man's affection and admiration were all for Napoleon; George III. inspired him with neither. He is rumoured to have congratulated King Joseph on the defeat of his fellow-countrymen at Ocana. On March 21st he sent the Emperor the warmest congratulations on his coming marriage with Marie Louise, daughter of the defeated Francis II., and promised a lifelong gratitude for permission to be present; and on April 1st, at the marriage

¹ *ib.*, 38.

² *ib.*, 39.

festivities, he was the first, at the end of the Te Deum, to cry out, "Long live the Emperor." It was at this time that occurred the strange episode of Baron Kolli, the Irish spy, in whom Lord Wellesley and the Duke of Kent placed so implicit a trust as to send him, well equipped with funds, to try to rescue Ferdinand from his imprisonment. Kolli, falling into the hands of spies cleverer than himself, was captured in Paris, and consigned to Vincennes, where he remained a prisoner till the victory of the Allies in 1814; but the French artfully sent a false Kolli to Valençay on the same mission, to see what Ferdinand would do. Luckily for Ferdinand, he was only greatly alarmed and angry with the British for their plot to rescue him. So a promising tragedy ended in comedy; and on May 3rd Ferdinand wrote to Napoleon expressive of his "lively desire to become his adoptive son;" for this would remove from a blinded people every pretext for continuing to cover their country with blood in the name of a prince, become by his own choice and by adoption a French prince and son of Napoleon.¹

When at the age of thirty, in 1814, the course of events restored Ferdinand to Spain as King, the forces of reaction triumphed as they seldom have in any country. The new king fell completely under the influence of the monks and the Church. On May 4th the Cortes was declared an illegal assembly and the Constitution illegal; subsequently a strict censorship was placed on the Press; the Inquisition was restored, and the old tortures revived; the Jesuits were recalled, and persons of liberal opinions subjected to every form of persecution. And this state of things lasted till 1820, when a successful counter-revolution brought a remedy. History presents few greater ironies than the fact that for six years we shed our blood like water, and spent our wealth in lavish profusion for the deliverance of Spain, only to subject

¹ Mémoires Historiques sur Ferdinand VII., 364.

her to the mercy of our *protégé*, and to a tyranny that has seldom been surpassed. The lesson against our intervention in the affairs of foreign states was never more conclusively taught.

The military situation seemed to Napoleon favourable for peace negotiations. In Spain his arms had nearly triumphed, and the great autocratic monarchies of Europe had been reduced to a state of restless repose. Only England remained at war with France, and the disappointments of Walcheren and of Talavera inclined even her to a pacific disposition. To a similar disposition Napoleon was himself impelled by his new matrimonial tie with the Austrian princess, Marie Louise, daughter of his aforetime enemy, the Austrian Emperor, and successor to the divorced Josephine ; for even Napoleon, though we called him " the Corsican monster," and he called us " leopards " in return, was a human being at bottom. The wedding took place at Vienna on March 11th, and surely in this amazing world of our ancestors, where men and monarchs fought to-day and kissed to-morrow, the most amazing picture of all is that of the Archduke Charles, Napoleon's bitter adversary on so many a battlefield, acting as proxy for him at the nuptial ceremony. It was a world where nothing was impossible, nothing justified surprise.

Napoleon's idea was to use his policy towards Holland as a means to peace. His brother Louis, made King of that country in 1806, much against his will, had loyally accepted the position, but was no more disposed than Joseph to a tame subservience to the fraternal suzerainty. He would be no nominal king, but a real one ; and his independence constantly thwarted the policy of Napoleon, especially in reference to the Continental system, which he detested as likely to ruin Holland sooner than it could ruin England. He winked therefore at the illicit importation of British goods, with which a brisk trade was carried on. So far as his hands were free,

he made an excellent monarch, introducing a new civil and criminal code, and making reforms of a liberal kind which won him the real affection of his subjects. But he feared all the time that Napoleon was meaning to annex his kingdom to the French Empire, and, after the menace to Antwerp by the English expedition in 1809 had revealed the weakness of the Dutch frontier, Napoleon took steps in that direction. Such annexation being obviously most contrary to British interests, Champagny (Duc de Cadore), the French Foreign Minister, was instructed to persuade Louis to inform his Ministers that such signs of annexation were only meant to frighten the English into making a peace as an alternative. Louis, at first indignant, ended by writing to that effect on January 9th, 1810, from Paris to his Ministers, instructing them without delay to send some trusty merchant to England to point out that only a cessation of the maritime war could save the independence of Holland.¹ But the King's accompanying projected letter to be sent to Lord Wellesley was disapproved of by Napoleon, who was not satisfied till January 24th with a projected note, corrected by his own hand, to be sent by the Dutch merchant Labouchere to England. This note to the Dutch ministers was a long recital of French grievances under the British system of blockade² and was intended to be the basis of a proposal that, if we would cease to act on that system and would withdraw our Orders in Council, he would withdraw his Berlin and Milan decrees, and would not annex Holland. On January 10th he wrote indignantly to Champagny of the British claim to put a tax on the commerce of all nations, and to treat the sea as he might treat the Seine, the Scheldt, or the Rhine. But he had heard that we had ceased to levy such taxes; he wished Champagny to ascertain if it were so, for once he was assured that England would not place an octroi on navigation he also could relax on many points.³ This

¹ Du Casse, 124-6. ² *ib.*, 131-4. ³ Corresp., XX., 110, No. 16127.

shows him to have been in no intractable mood, but prepared to meet concession with concession. Labouchere's instructions were dated February 1st, but Lord Wellesley's reply on the 12th, that France showed no disposition to peace nor to the abatement of her claims, sent Labouchere back convinced of the hopelessness of an agreement.¹

Dr. Holland Rose thinks that our chief objection to treat was an objection more "against the man himself and his whole policy," than against the intrinsic merits of the proposal;² a not very convincing reason for an indefinite prolongation of the war. This was the seventh overture of peace Napoleon had made which directly or indirectly would have included England: the first in June, 1804, the second in January, 1805, the third and fourth after Eylau in 1807, the fifth in August, 1807, the sixth in October, 1807, the seventh in October, 1808. The assumption that these offers were insincere or that they might not have led to satisfactory terms was the ordinary pretext of a diplomacy that was either indifferent or hostile to peace. In this case Napoleon's sincerity is suggested by the fact that he soon made another attempt, not mentioned by Dr. Rose, to negotiate. On March 20th, he wrote to Louis to send Labouchere or other agent again to London, but this time in Louis' own name and not in that of his Ministers, and with a note not signed nor traceable to any known individual. This note was to say that the day the Orders in Council were withdrawn the French would evacuate Holland, and perhaps the Hanseatic towns; and to point out how such an arrangement would restore England's trade with the Continent and maintain her peace with America. The note concluded with the remark that "for not having made peace sooner, England has lost Naples, Spain, Portugal, and the market of Trieste. It is evident that, if she delays to make it, she will lose Holland, the

¹ Du Casse., 135.

² II., 213.

Hanseatic towns, and will hold Sicily with difficulty." This remark, which was not without truth, occurs in neither of the two letters of Napoleon to Champagny of March 20th (as stated by Dr. Rose), but in the note enclosed in the Letter to Louis.¹ Nothing however came of this note, though it appears that Fouché (Duc d'Otrante), Chief of Police, carried on a peace negotiation on his own account soon afterwards, the result being a confusion of his proposals with Napoleon's, who in a letter of June 3rd, thus expressed his annoyance: "A negotiation has been opened with England; conversations have taken place with Lord Wellesley. This Minister knew that these approaches were made in your name; he should have believed they were in mine; hence a fatal upsetting of all my political relations and, if I tolerated it, a stain on my character which I neither can nor will suffer."² And the Duc d'Otrante was deprived of his post.

Whether, if we had met Napoleon on the basis of mutual maritime concessions, he would not have annexed Holland may be open to doubt; but, failing peace, political advantage was so obviously on the side of annexation that, in days when no other moral principle was recognised by any Power, the annexation itself cannot be condemned. And Louis' abdication on July 1st released him from a thralldom that had become intolerable. The Hanseatic towns were also annexed, whilst Hanover was incorporated with the Kingdom of Westphalia, and its very name abolished.³

Meantime the French successes of the early part of 1810 continued on the Peninsula. On May 14th the town of Lerida in Catalonia suffered at the hands of Suchet's troops more than the [customary atrocities which the accepted laws of war justify still in the case of places taken by storm. For a whole night and day the wretched population, seeking a vain refuge in the

¹ Correspondence, XX., 275, 6, No. 16352.

²*ib.*, XX., 392, No. 16529.

³ Ann. Reg., 1810, 238.

citadel, suffered a cruel bombardment before the white flag was hoisted to stop the butchery.

Marshal Masséna with 86,000 men, began operations early in June, cherishing no unreasonable hope that the French eagles would soon wave over the towers of Lisbon, and the English leopards be driven into the sea. Wellington's forces were insufficient to prevent the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo on July 11th, and of Almeida on August 27th. In the case of the latter a bomb falling on 150,000 lbs. of gunpowder, had blown the cathedral and most of the edifices in the town to atoms, and, causing a mutiny in the garrison, rendered a capitulation unavoidable. Nor did the British victory at Busaco on September 27th check Masséna's invasion of Portugal; but Masséna carried all before him till he came against Wellington's lines of Torres Vedras, which presented an impassable barrier; and thus Lisbon first and ultimately the whole of Portugal were saved from a conquest that but for Wellington's foresight and skill seemed their certain fate. The following March the Marshal moved his camp from a region where he found it well-nigh impossible to feed his forces; and therewith the tide had turned.

But, as regards Spain, almost the whole of it, Cadiz still holding out, was in French occupation, though the growing guerilla warfare made it far from easy. Nothing seemed less likely than success in a land war which was costing us £360,000 a month. In November Sweden joined Russia and Denmark in the war against us; whilst with America also war was coming daily nearer, our refusal to give up our claim to search American vessels for British seamen keeping up a continual soreness.¹ Napoleon, heedless of the injury to his own country, dealt a further blow at our maritime rights by his decree of October 18th, which condemned to be burnt all English goods found on land or sea. On the other hand, our immense maritime supremacy placed all French colonial

¹ Ann. Reg., 1810, 259.

territory at our mercy ; the capture of Guadaloupe on February 6th, deprived France of her last West Indian Island, whilst on December 6th the capture of Mauritius (the Isle of France) completed the conquest of the whole colonial territory of France. Henceforth France had nothing she could call her own in the East or the West Indies. Whilst her military strength placed nearly the whole of Europe under her control, our naval superiority was such that almost any island we fancied was to be picked up for the sailing. Neither enemy could throw the other ; the contest had come to seem as hopeless as one between a dog and a fish.

FRANCE AND RUSSIA

The chief hope lay in the growing impatience of Alexander with his French alliance, and in the chance of detaching him from it. The relaxation by Russia of her exclusion of British goods and their permitted importation by neutral American vessels clearly threatened the success of the Continental system against England, and mightily vexed its author. But what Napoleon regarded as a crowning insult was the decree to burn all provisions coming from France ; in reprisals for which he ordered all wood, hemp, etc., coming from Russia to be burnt.¹ It could not be represented by Alexander that the Russian ukase against French commerce was in reply to Napoleon's annexation of the German littoral, for Napoleon, on inquiry into the dates, found that the senatorial decree of annexation was dated January 2nd, 1811, but the ukase on December 31st, 1810.² And to these causes of difference was added the refusal of the Russian court to suffer Napoleon to marry the sister of the Czar, when in his search for a successor to Josephine he had looked in that direction before turning to Austria.

But the root of their difference was the Polish question. The Duchy of Warsaw was the real cause of all further troubles till and even during the Congress of Vienna at

¹ Tatitscheff, 556, 7.

² Vandal, III., 62.

the end of the war in 1814. Alexander wanted to take it from the King of Saxony and bring it under his own sway. His secret letters with Prince Czartoryski prove that, whilst professing fears of Napoleon's restoring Poland, he himself was scheming to do so in a Russian sense. That is, he hoped to make a new Poland out of the Russian Polish provinces, the Duchy of Warsaw, and Galicia. For the loss of Galicia Austria was to be offered in exchange the Turkish provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia. The essential condition was that this Polish kingdom should for ever be united to Russia, whose Emperor was in future to add the title of King of Poland to that of Czar of Russia.¹ But in this same letter this craftiest of monarchs says that he tried to dissipate rumours of his intention to become King of Poland by declaring such a thing impossible.²

At the close of 1810 he regarded his projected defection with great hopefulness. He told Czartoryski on December 25th, 1810 his plans. He hoped to get 50,000 Poles from the Duchy of Warsaw; and these, added to 50,000 Poles from the Russian Polish provinces, would probably tempt 95,000 German fighters from the side of France to that of Russia; Austria in gratitude for the gift of the Turkish provinces in lieu of Galicia would probably contribute 200,000 men, and thus against a French total of only 60,000 men, the peace-loving Alexander calculated that with a mixed army of Russians, Poles, Prussians, Austrians and Danes, amounting to 559,000 men, he might safely venture on war with his ally.³ In the same month this frank and honest monarch was assuring Napoleon that he had nothing more at heart than the continuance of their alliance, and that he put no faith in the alarming reports of German statesmen, for that he relied on Napoleon's assurances.⁴ If ever duplicity was the chief characteristic of a human being, it was that of the virtuous Alexander.

¹ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 222-8, January 31st, 1811.

² *ib.*, II., 228.

³ *ib.*, II., 217, 8, 224.

⁴ Tatitscheff, 542.

CHAPTER X

1811. Continental Unrest

HENCEFORTH the two emperors were as wolf against wolf, snake against snake ; but Alexander had been the first to show his fangs. Each mistrusted and feared the other. In the early months of 1811 each moved fresh forces towards his respective frontiers with the greatest attempts at secrecy. Each hoped to have the advantage of the first offensive, but while Napoleon counted on the possibility of a full year's preparation, Alexander was ready and willing to strike in the spring of 1811. Why did he delay ? Because unforeseen circumstances upset his calculations. The Poles in the Duchy of Warsaw did not respond to his allurements ; they preferred Napoleon to Alexander. He was compelled to tell Czartoryski that he had decided not to begin war till more fully assured of the co-operation of the Poles. Metternich moreover became suspicious of the Czar's intentions ; going even so far as to say that if Russian troops were concentrated near Galicia, Austria would feel obliged to put herself on a war footing.¹

Hardly had France and Napoleon on March 20th, 1811, gone into a delirium of joy at the birth of an heir to the Empire, than the most sinister rumours arrived of Russian military movements threatening the Duchy of Warsaw. The sky soon clouded over again. War was again in the air, as desired and designed by France's treacherous Russian ally. Nevertheless, the Czar's blow having misfired, it was his interest, as also Napoleon's, to preserve the forms of friendship and to feel or affect

¹ Vandal, III., 105, 6.

a wish to negotiate. In a letter of March 25th, 1811, to Napoleon, Alexander summed up the grievances he had against his ally. Among these a foremost grievance was the annexation of the Duchy of Oldenburg to France. Why, asked the Czar, should this little corner of the earth have been taken from his brother-in-law, though as part of the Rhine Confederation it was not only under Napoleon's protection but guaranteed by the Treaty of Tilsit; and that without a word to Alexander beforehand? As to the new tariff, he denied that it was specially directed against France. Russia had no interest in a war; she had no need of conquests, having already perhaps too much territory. There would be no war, if Napoleon desired it as little as he did; but if war came it would be because Napoleon desired it.¹

The recriminatory tone of this letter was little calculated to preserve harmony between two friends whose position made mutual suspicion inevitable. With swarms of spies all over Europe how could either increase or move his forces without some knowledge of it reaching the other? How could either expect to be believed when he resorted to the familiar platitude of a purely defensive purpose, or to some such false reason as Napoleon employed when an imaginary attack by an English squadron on Dantzic was made to explain movements of his troops in that direction?¹ Suspicion was also increased by misinformation about the troop movements of the other by their own servants, some of whom, like Count Tolstoi at Paris, did their best to provoke a rupture.²

The most interesting of Napoleon's war preparations was his order for twenty-eight million bottles of wine and for two million of brandy³; that was regarded as a year's supply. How long would it last for a modern army?

Napoleon was under no delusions. He took an almost fatalistic view of the inevitability of a war, writing on

¹ Vandal, III., 70.

² Tatitscheff, 243.

³ Vandal, III., 233.

April 2nd, 1811, to the Duke of Wurtemberg: "The war will take place; in spite of myself, in spite of the Emperor Alexander, in spite of French and of Russian interests. I have already seen it so often, and it is my experience of the past which reveals to me this future." When all was over, in 1816, he said the same: "I did not wish the war; I did not want to fight. Alexander did not wish it any more than myself, but once in presence of each other circumstances pushed us against one another, and fatality did the rest." As fatality always will, so long as mutual fear and overweening military pride win their customary and easy victory over the forces of peace and prudence.

Nevertheless Napoleon tried to avert the inevitable. At first he treated the Oldenberg question as a trifle, and proposed compensation for it at Erfurt or elsewhere. But the Czar and Chancellor Romanzov saw in the dispute a chance for compensation from the Duchy of Warsaw, and in an interview on April 10th, between Napoleon and Col. Tchernicheff, the Russian agent or spy, sent to propose this bargain, Napoleon showed intense indignation at the idea of giving up either the whole Duchy or Dantzic in exchange for Oldenberg; "to give up the Duchy of Warsaw for Oldenberg would," he said, "be the height of madness." Nevertheless, he made other definite offers for compensation, only asking in return for a cessation of the burning of French goods sent to Russia. On such a basis he would proceed to propose a simultaneous reduction of armaments. But though the talk after four and a half hours ended on a friendly note, the sting remained unextracted.¹

On June 5th Caulaincourt, returning to Paris from his Russian embassy, had a several hours' talk with Napoleon, of which Vandal has given so graphic an account.² Caulaincourt failed altogether to convince Napoleon of Alexander's loyalty to the Alliance; nor indeed could he

¹ Vandal, III., 133.

² III., 175-89.

pretend that Alexander would yield on the principal point : the exclusion of British commerce from his ports. The Czar's military preparations and intentions, which Prince Poniatowski, the Pole, who by some means had seen the Czar's letters to Czartoryski, had made widely known, seem to have left no impression on Caulaincourt, still under the enchantment of the monarch's musical voice and honied phrases ; but Napoleon had the truer insight ; " he is false and feeble," he cried, " he is false and is of the Greek character."¹ But on one point Caulaincourt was right : in warning Napoleon, in default of a peace obtained by certain concessions, against the temptation of a war carried into the heart of Russia itself. His forecast of disaster was prophetic in its accuracy, but it beat in vain against the military confidence of Napoleon. For did not the number of his legions render him invincible ?

Both sides subsided for the time into a state of indecisive bitterness, Alexander making the most of the Oldenberg grievance, but steadfastly declining to answer definitely what compensation would satisfy him and heal the sore. All the summer Russian and English agents of the neutral Courts worked and plotted for a new league against France ; and American ships, no longer singly or by stealth, but in fleets and openly, brought English goods into Russian ports. Till at last came a day when Napoleon's wrath exploded. This was on August 15th 1811, his fête-day, when before the Diplomatic Body he harangued Prince Kurakin, the Russian ambassador, for two hours. Poland, not Oldenberg, was the real cause of the trouble, he said, but as to making any compensation from the Duchy of Warsaw, he would not yield an inch of it, even though the armies of Russia were encamped on Montmartre ; not a village, nor a mill would he part with in that direction. But he had not a thought of restoring Poland ; such a policy was not the interest of France ; though, if he were forced to war, he would make

¹ III. 186.

use of Poland against Russia. He denied all wish for war, or of making it that year, unless he were attacked ; but if the crisis was not over by November, he would raise 100,000 additional men, and would continue fighting for two or three years till Russia had lost all her Polish provinces.¹ And from that time onward his mind was fixed on war for the following year, in June, though pacific negotiations did not cease to accompany his prodigious military preparations.

The quarrel between the two great lords of Europe placed Prussia in a terrible dilemma. Should she seek a French or a Russian alliance ? A forged document, dated November 16th, 1810, and attributed to Champagny, which advocated the annihilation of Prussia, strengthened the Prussian anti-French party, and on July 16th, 1811, Gen. Scharnhorst, famous for the re-organisation of the Prussian army, was sent to St. Petersburg to crave Alexander's alliance and aid. By devious ways and under a disguised name Scharnhorst reached the Russian capital, where in October he interviewed the Czar, and on the 17th prevailed on him to sign a military convention which promised a definite though restricted co-operation with the Prussian armies. But meantime Napoleon, become aware of the secret military preparations of Prussia and able at any moment to crush her, was insisting on her discontinuing her feverish preparations for war as an alternative to his dethroning Frederick William and wiping Prussia once for all off the map of Europe. The King promised Napoleon compliance with his wishes, but continued his preparations all the same, hoping for a favourable answer from Russia. When Napoleon discovered this treacherous conduct, on November 14th, 1811, he instructed Marshal Davoust to prepare a military plan for the destruction of his treacherous neighbour. But as the terms Napoleon offered of an alliance seemed to the King, who saw, as

¹ *ib.*, III., 274.

he said, abysses opening on all sides of him, to offer the best chance of safety ; and after Scharnhorst had been sent to Vienna to solicit an Austrian alliance, and had returned at the end of the year discomfited by Metternich's polite but decided refusal, Frederick William and Count Hardenberg had no option left but to accept unconditionally on January 29th, 1812, the terms of an alliance imposed by Napoleon.¹

Wellington's repulse of Masséna from Lisbon doubtless encouraged Alexander in his plan for turning his arms against his French ally ; for it showed that his ally was not invulnerable. But the subsequent campaign of 1811 on the Peninsula fell short of the success achieved at Torres Vedras, and probably had its share in causing Alexander to postpone his meditated League of Nations against France.

For the joy naturally felt in England at Wellington's repulse of Masséna's march against Lisbon suffered some abatement in the early months of 1811 by reason of incidents of a less pleasing nature. The fortress of Olivenza surrendered to Marshal Soult on January 22nd, and on March 10th the strong frontier town of Badajoz, with its garrison of 8,000, capitulated, only two days before Beresford arrived to relieve it. Masséna the same month found it necessary to leave his camp at Santerem, some forty miles from Lisbon, and retire from Portugal altogether ; the towns and villages he passed on his retreat being invariably burnt. His invasion had cost France 45,000 men : a foretaste of the invasion of Russia in the following year. His retreat and Wellington's pursuit caused frightful sufferings to Portugal ; but the successful liberation of the soil from the invader justly called for the reward of £100,000 voted by Parliament, and for the still larger sums generously paid from every corner of England to palliate the enormous distress which the war had brought to the Portuguese.

¹ Vandal, III., 253-85.

Nevertheless no great success attended Wellington's campaign in 1811. For the future defence of Portugal it was most essential to gain possession of the strong frontier towns. Though Beresford recovered Olivenza, he failed to take Badajoz. Soult came from Seville to raise the siege, but after his great losses at Albuera on May 16th, returned again southward, and the strong reinforcements sent by Napoleon compelled Wellington to raise the ineffectual siege. Nor did he succeed any better against Ciudad Rodrigo ; so that of the confused operations of the year only the victory at Albuera stood out with any distinction. But it was one of the bloodiest battles of the war, and Lord Liverpool in moving a vote of thanks to General Beresford, had to qualify the national satisfaction by connecting the victory with a loss of life that had been seldom "surpassed."¹ The casualties were over 4,000, and it was said that several British regiments were nearly annihilated.²

By a strange coincidence on the same day, May 16th, a naval action occurred off the American coast between the American frigate, *The President*, and an English sloop of war, called *The Little Belt*, with much loss of life to the latter. The tension was fast growing. Our refusal to withdraw the Orders in Council was the cause of such friction that before the end of the year a force of 10,000 Regulars and 50,000 militia was proposed to be raised in America.

THE WAR IN SPAIN

The liberation of Spain seemed further off than ever. With the chief exception of Cadiz almost the whole of Spain was subjugated, and the military chances of success seemed infinitesimal. Marshal Suchet continued his victories in Catalonia. Tortosa, besieged since November, 1810, surrendered on January 2nd, 1811. On March 29th the unresisting town of Manressa was wantonly burnt by the troops of Marshal Macdonald ; causing the war to

¹ Parl. Deb., XX., 513.

² Ann. Reg., 1811, 106.

be still more fiercely waged by the proclamation of the Spanish generals that French soldiers found in the vicinity of a burnt town should receive no quarter. But Suchet's most brilliant success was against the immensely strong fortress town of Tarragona, the capture of whose arsenal and harbour would complete the conquest of the Catalonian coast. At the end of June the place was taken by storm, with the usual atrocities. Suchet had expressed the fear of having to make "a terrible example" by intimidating Catalonia and Spain for ever by the destruction of the whole city. Soon afterwards he wrote: "the terrible example I foresaw with regret in my last report had taken place," a "horrible massacre" had occurred; 4,000 had been killed in the city, and 10,000 prisoners taken. The favourite militarist argument for cruelty in war, that it mercifully shortens its duration, derived as little justification from this instance of it as it has from a thousand similar illustrations.

In his progress into the interior of the province Suchet acted on the same principle; yet he was by nature among the more humane of Napoleon's marshals. And success continued to follow his standard. After taking Mont Serrat in July, and Figueras in August, he proceeded to the province of Valencia, where on October 25th Murviedro, perched on precipitous rocks, surrendered: a place memorable in ancient days as Saguntum, whose chiefs in the year 218 B.C. rather than fall alive into Hannibal's hands had thrown themselves into the same fire into which they had thrown their property. Thus 2,000 years made little difference: the same barbarity was in progress 1,800 years after Christ that had disgraced the civilisation of 200 years before that epoch. Suchet's attention was next turned to Valencia, the richest city in Spain after Cadiz, and its successful siege that ended on January 2nd, 1812, was the greatest blow yet struck against the Spanish cause. As many as 16,000 regular troops were made prisoners, and immense stores and

ammunition taken. Thus the pacification of the province of Valencia followed close on that of Catalonia.

Could such disasters have been prevented ; especially the worst of all, the fall of Tarragona ? Alison thinks so ; if only the British Government had not kept 12,000 troops marking time in Sicily, instead of sending them to Catalonia. But might not Sicily have risen, and tried to throw off an alliance which under Lord William Bentinck's commandership of the British forces in Sicily bore little difference from sovereignty ? Sicily was costing us £400,000 a year : which entitled us, as the Queen said to Sir Robert Wilson in May, 1812, to give advice, " but not to act as mistress without the declaration of war, and the subsequent triumph of our power." ¹ The world, generally blind to those virtues that were so visible to ourselves, attributed to us designs of universal annexation. Even Spain, which we were liberating, was so firmly convinced that we meant to annex Cadiz that Lord Wellesley was constrained to write to the Spanish Secretary of State to assure him of our perfect innocence of the designs attributed to us by the Spanish press. ²

But outside Europe the wishes of our annexationists were amply gratified. The islands of Amboyna and Bantam became ours in February, and in September the vast island of Java, 50,000 square miles, succumbed after a vigorous resistance. The French and Dutch had thus been driven from every possession they had ever had in the Indian Ocean. Yet at the final peace all we kept of the original French colonies were Mauritius, Tobago, and St. Lucia ; whilst for retaining the Cape, Demarara and Curoçoa we paid six millions. If such terms were sufficient to satisfy us, peace was not out of reach in 1811, had there only been the will to make it on the part of the Prince Regent, Perceval and Lord Wellesley.

In this state of things, when one Spanish fortress after another was falling to the enemy, when in Portugal

¹ Diary, I., 57.

² Ann. Reg., II., 337.

by October 19,000 British and 6,000 Portuguese soldiers were in the hospitals, it is not surprising that in spite of Wellington's successful defence of Lisbon, it should have been debated whether it was wise to continue the Peninsular war. Lord Wellesley's contention on March 21st, 1811, that we were equally bound by honour and interest to continue our assistance to Portugal, was strongly disputed by Lord Grenville, whose view was that, as there was no present chance against Napoleon in that quarter, we should husband our resources till some chance in the future gave us a prospect of effective intervention. Whilst protesting against the gross misrepresentation which pictured him as indifferent to the cause of Spain and Portugal, he asked his fellow peers to pause in "this wild mad career of thoughtless prodigality," and not to throw away million after million in a hopeless cause.¹

In the temper of the ruling classes of that day he might as well have argued with the sea; though unrepresented England would doubtless have voted with him by a large majority. The force of argument, though entirely on his side, was counteracted by the large powers which a Government can always employ to foster the popularity of any war so far as the Press of the day can be taken as an index of it. The life of a War Government is in danger if it once loses the cheap popularity which it acquires by those delusive hopes of ultimate victory that can alone keep public opinion up to the level of its first enthusiasm for a war. Therefore it must resort to war propaganda, or deliberate distortions of facts, in order to keep its policy in favour with the people. This plan was freely used at this time. Everything was done to belittle the numbers or courage of the enemy, and to excite hatred against him by tales of atrocities that were so often fictitious as to make much of the history of the war totally valueless. "Members of Parliament," says Napier, "related stories of the enemy which had no

¹ Parl. Deb., XIX., 450-7.

foundation in truth, and nothing that intrigue could bring to aid party spirit and stifle reason was neglected." Again, "Every Treasury newspaper spoke of battles which were never fought, plans which were never arranged, places taken which were never attacked, victories gained where no armies were."¹ From this sea of mendacity which constituted the war propaganda of those days, how could contemporaries, how can posterity hope to find a solid foothold for truth?

In certain quarters the assassination of Napoleon seemed the quickest method of liberating Europe from his power. On June 24th, 1811, Lord Grey complained of the open advocacy of this plan in a French paper, published in London, and widely read on the Continent. Was this paper Peltier's *L'Ambigu* again? Lord Wellesley as strongly reprobated the doctrines of the paper, and deprecated the vile abuse of Napoleon in which it indulged.² Whitbread in the Commons on July 1st spoke of these doctrines as preached by more than one paper, by "a part of the press," but in the French language, for circulation abroad, where they were thought to be sanctioned by our Government. Perceval, of course, disavowed these papers as strongly as Lord Wellesley had done, and on this point at least there was no difference of parties.³ But whether steps were taken to check the abuse does not appear. The same papers that advocated the assassination of Napoleon said that a certain Hawk-itzer had been sent from France to try to assassinate George III. The fetish of the freedom of the press was carried to the point of a foolish idolatry.

The year finished gloomily, with a total failure to free the Peninsula. It did not appear to contemporaries to be in our power "to afford such aid as should turn the fortune of war" in favour of Spain.⁴ In the French Annual Report to the Legislative Body on June 29th,

¹ II. 383.

² Parl. Deb., XX., 738.

³ *ib.*, XX., 778-82.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1811, 122.

it was declared that the only guarantee of the lasting peace for which France craved was a fleet of 150 ships of the line and an English Cabinet of different principles to those of the existing Tory Government.¹ It was the year of the Regency under restrictions, and the uncertainty about the Ministry that the Prince Regent would choose, when on the year's completion the restrictions would be removed, that gave the country as poor a Government as its worst enemy could desire.

It was difficult to be an optimist in such conditions ; but there were two reasons which, had they been known, would have lent some countenance to counsels of hope. One was the difficult position of King Joseph in Spain. On November 3rd, 1810, he had written to his wife from Madrid : " The position of affairs here is horrible, and soon will become irremediable " ; and on January 8th, 1811, he wrote that the decree of February 8th, 1810, which had transferred all real power from himself to the generals, had destroyed all his earlier hopes of winning the goodwill of the Spaniards.² Napoleon kept him sadly short of funds, and after Joseph had gone to Paris and obtained from him a promise of a million francs a month from July, the promise was so badly kept that on October 1st Joseph described himself as still in great embarrassment.³ Thus the political state of the new kingdom was far weaker than its military successes indicated.

The other reason was the French war with Russia which destiny had in view for the following year. Throughout the year the differences between Napoleon and Alexander had been so acute as to lead to a wide expectation of a declaration of war by one or the other.⁴ But for the time such a war was at best only a hopeful possibility on which no political reliance could safely be placed.

¹ *ib.*, 131.

³ *ib.*, 50.

² Du Casse, 41, 43.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1811, 137.

CHAPTER XI

1812. Russia Invaded

IN the year 1812 the misery caused by the war reached high-water mark. One sees now to how little purpose. First, the Peninsular War, with our forces battling to restore Spain to a tyranny worse than the one we fought to remove; then the Russian war, to liberate Europe from Napoleon, only to subject her to the coming Holy Alliance of the European autocrats against freedom of every sort. Of all the delusions by which nations are lured into war the pretext of liberation is by far the most fallacious; since war always spells an increase of despotism alike for the conquering as for the conquered nation.

But, given the delusion, there was justifiable rejoicing when news reached England of Wellington's having taken Ciudad Rodrigo by storm on January 19th, 1812, after a siege of only twelve days. The removal of large French forces from Spain in December, 1811, for the expected Russian war¹ facilitated a success which had been denied to the British arms in 1811; the garrison reduced to 1,500 could not withstand an assault of 12,000,² though Napier was of opinion that with a garrison of 5,000 this important frontier town would have been unassailable.³ It was unfortunate that the amazing valour displayed in taking the place was marred by the subsequent incidents that seem to be inseparable from the storming of towns. For the plundering of churches, the pillage of the wine cellars, the incendiarism, the drunkenness, and the violence, Alison found comfort in the belief that

¹ Napier, IV., 81

² Parl. Deb., XXI., 874.

³ IV., 93.

there was "no slaughter, either of the citizens or the enemy,"¹ but, though the capture of 1,500 French prisoners partially confirms this, Napier in reference to the sufferings of the citizens, writes: "Disgraceful were the excesses of the allied troops: the Spanish people were allies and friends, unarmed, helpless, and all these claims were disregarded."² It is impossible to reconcile Napier with Alison.

The still greater triumph of the storming of Badajoz on April 6th, after a siege which had cost us no less than 5,000 British and Portuguese casualties, though it made Portugal more defensible, and Spain more assailable by our forces, was tarnished by similar scenes. "Shameless rapacity, brutal intemperance, savage lust, cruelty and murder," says Napier, raged for two days and nights,³ nor is the story much bettered by Alison's reflection that when the French stormed Tarragona some four thousand lost their lives, including those of the garrison.⁴ In Napier's opinion it served as no excuse for such excesses that the soldiers could not be controlled; but from time immemorial such deeds have belonged to the received tradition of legitimate warfare. The Romans used to kill dogs and other animals besides all human beings in the towns they stormed.⁵

The capture of these two fortresses profoundly improved our military position, amounting in fact to the liberation of Portugal, and indicative of the possibility of that of Spain. The Ciudad Rodrigo success seemed to some in England a favourable moment for a peace negotiation. "I am so much of opinion," wrote Francis Jackson to his brother George on February 12th, "that the present is a good moment for negotiation with France that I want to know what objection can be stated against it other than those general ones about any peace with Bonaparte"⁶ The financial distress of the country with its attendant

¹ VIII., 481.² IV., 93.³ IV., 122.⁴ VIII., 503.⁵ Polybius, X., 15.⁶ Bath Archives, I., 330.

riotings and discontent pointed in the same direction ; nor was there any reason to suppose that the substitution in February 28th of Lord Castlereagh for Lord Wellesley at the Foreign Office would bring final victory any nearer.

Napoleon too had obvious motives for peace. No cheering news came from brother Joseph, whom it was impossible to supply with half the funds promised when he visited Paris in 1811, and of whom the Military Generals were as jealous as they were of one another. And the imminent Russian war necessitated the withdrawal of 60,000 of some of the best troops and many of the best generals.

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN ALLIANCE

On February 24th, 1812, Prussia had no choice but to sign with great reluctance her treaty of alliance with France, which involved a contingent application of the exclusion of neutral commerce and a secret stipulation of a supply of 20,000 Prussians for the field, and of as many for garrison work.¹ The treaty was ratified on March 5th. The French forces were on the frontiers, prepared to pass through Prussia in any case ; it was advisable to accept necessity with the best grace possible ; on March 28th the French forces entered Berlin and occupied all the public buildings except the Royal Palace. Berlin for the time became a French city ; and enormous contributions were extorted from the country, including two million bottles of beer and two million bottles of brandy : a hard trial of Prussia's love for her French ally.¹

THE FRANCO-AUSTRIAN ALLIANCE

An apparently more willing treaty of alliance was made by Austria with France. Metternich, who stood for Austria in a far more real sense than Francis (the first Austrian Emperor of that name, and formerly the

¹ Ann. Reg., 1812, II., 418. Alison, VIII., 750.

second German Emperor), whose levity or wisdom it was to prefer fishing and horticulture to politics, saw more momentary advantage from a French than from a Prussian alliance. From a French alliance might he not hope, in the event of a French victory, to recover Silesia, which Prussia had taken from Austria under Frederick the Great? So Prince Schwartzberg, Austria's ambassador at Paris for the last two years, was at the end of 1811 given wide powers to treat; and on March 14th a treaty resulted which committed Austria to the supply of 30,000 men to the allied cause; to a joint guarantee of the integrity of Turkey; and to laws of maritime war as settled at the Peace of Utrecht.¹ In return, hopes of territorial gains were held out to her, with a prospect even of Silesia if Prussia gave the least cause of offence.² Schwartzberg was placed at the head of the Austrian contingent; the same Schwartzberg who in 1813 and 1814 was to lead a changed alliance of forces against the very same power of which he was now the willing instrument. The fidelity of the instruments of these warring Powers was as fickle as the potentates that ruled them. To-day it was a League of Nations under France against Russia; to-morrow it would be a League of Nations under Russia against France.

It is difficult to form an idea of the extraordinary falsity of the monarchs and diplomats of this time. Frederick William III. had no sooner signed his alliance with France than he wrote to the Czar a letter of apology, and continued friendly relations with the feigned enemy through accredited but secret agents.³ From Bavaria and other German kingdoms Alexander received similar assurances of sympathy. As for the crafty Metternich, he let Russia understand that the French treaty need not be taken seriously; the two Powers should remain secret friends, though apparent enemies; Napoleon should

¹ Ann. Reg., 1812, II., 419.

² Vandal, III., 287, 332.

³ Vandal, III., 449.

never have more than 26,000 men of the 30,000 promised, nor should these march far over the Russian frontier. Thus he bought off a threatened Russian attack on the side of Hungary and Transylvania.¹ But if there were degrees of duplicity it was Bernadotte who went furthest. The alarm at first felt by the Czar at the news of the Franco-Austrian alliance made Bernadotte fear lest his Russian ally, by a possible peace with Napoleon, should leave himself in the lurch and exposed to Napoleon's wrath; therefore he played the traitor to both sides, offering, in return for French support in robbing Denmark of Norway for certain compensations, an army of 50,000 Swedes, whilst at the same time continuing to assist Russia by all sorts of intrigues against France.² But perhaps the worst feature in this superlatively traitorous nature was the use he made of fables of his own coining, "colossal inventions," to blacken the character of his former benefactor, and, through the Russian ambassador at Stockholm, to keep Alexander's mind properly attuned to an implacable hatred of Napoleon.³ Probably much that passes as historical about Napoleon flowed originally from this polluted source. But what a strange crew were all these potentates; behaving to one another on principles of deceit and fraud which in humbler walks of life would have been accounted knavery, and thus suggesting whether after all morality is not very much a matter of social station.

NAPOLÉON'S PEACE OVERTURE

To close the Peninsular war, and so possibly to prevent a Russian war, strongly prompted Napoleon again to try to make peace with England. One of the most curious features of this war was the frequency of Napoleon's overtures for peace and their repeated rebuff by the Tory Ministry, which took little or no pains to test their sincerity. Yet when in April, after the fall of Badajoz, a flag of truce

¹ *ib.*, III., 448.

² *ib.*, III., 439-43.

³ *ib.*, III., 371, 2.

came from France, some even in the diplomatic world were for seizing the opportunity. George Jackson thought we should use the victorious moment for negotiating a peace, but, mistrustful of his own opinion, wished to know whether brother Francis (fifteen years his senior) thought him right or wrong.¹ "I lean very much," replied Francis, "to the idea of peace, because we can never think of it with so good grace and so much chance of success as when we are victorious."² And he was persuaded that "Boney" would like peace, though doubtful whether he would give up Spain to secure it.

There indeed lay the crux. The French proposal had decided attractions. Portugal was to have her independence and integrity guaranteed under the House of Braganza. The most important clause ran: "The integrity of Spain shall be guaranteed. France shall renounce all idea of extending her dominions beyond (*du côté des*) the Pyrenees. The actual dynasty shall be declared independent, and Spain governed by a national Constitution of the Cortes." The kingdom of Naples was to be left under Murat, but Sicily under the Bourbon family. The land and naval forces of both France and England were to be removed from Spain, Portugal and Sicily.³

Lord Castlereagh answered the Duc de Bassano on April 23rd, asking fairly enough for a more precise definition of the crucial clause. Did the independence of the "actual dynasty" apply to King Joseph or to Ferdinand VII.; if to the latter, negotiation on the proposed basis would not be refused.⁴ But to this no answer was vouchsafed.⁵ The reason for this was as curious as it was unfortunate. The flag of truce that conveyed Castlereagh's reply back to France, being fired at from Calais, was obliged to land at Morlaix, so that the

¹ Bath Archives, I., 357.

² *ib.*, I., 362.

³ Ann. Reg., 1812, 421. Parl. Deb., XXIII., 1159.

⁴ *ib.*, 1812, 422.

⁵ Parl. Deb., XXIII., 1068, 9.

despatch did not arrive till after April 25th, the day on which the French despatches started to Russia, and it was in vain that two messengers were sent to apologise for the mistake which had caused the firing.¹ Sheridan made great play with the perfidy and insidiousness of the overture, but another Minister than Castlereagh might surely have turned it to better account. How could the proposed evacuation of Spain by France have been compatible with Joseph's remaining as king? Could he have remained a day without French troops to support him? It was therefore at least possible that the words "actual dynasty" referred to Ferdinand, not to Joseph. Or the question between Joseph and Ferdinand might have been submitted to the decision of Spain, where an appreciable number would have preferred Joseph to the very reactionary Bourbon whose later restoration they had so much reason to deplore. A Russian victory over France was at that date too improbable to justify the rejection of any fair chance of peace.

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN WAR

Sincere as at one time was or seemed Alexander's friendship or affection for Napoleon, his love for the King of Prussia had for long surpassed it. The misfortune of the King and his beautiful wife after Jena appealed strongly to him as a monarch, nor did he heed Czartoryski's remonstrances, who told him that his personal friendship with a State of interests adverse to those of Russia was one of the most unfortunate things that ever happened.² Thus the young Czar's affections were drawn in different directions, though with a rapidly growing inclination to his beloved Frederick William III. On his way to Erfurt the Czar received a letter of August 28th, 1808, from his brother of Prussia, complaining of the hard terms attached by Napoleon to his promised evacuation of Prussia: a contribution of 140,000,000 francs, and the

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIII., 1125, 1131.

² Memoirs, II., 125.

French to continue to garrison Glogau, Stettin and Custrin till it was paid. At Alexander's intercession Napoleon agreed to reduce the sum by twenty millions,¹ and when on his return from Erfurt the Czar touched at Königsberg and told the Prussian King and Queen of the approaching evacuation of Berlin, he was greeted by them as their saviour and thought to have achieved the impossible.²

Never, wrote Mollien, the French Treasurer, had Paris been gayer with balls and frivolities than in the three first months of a year that was destined to end so miserably.³ On January 6th Napoleon wrote Mollien a very secret letter with details of the enormous force he was organising.⁴ But his plan of campaign was in no way formed, being based on topographical details of Russian roads, etc., which Bignon only received orders to supply on January 2nd.⁵ He still continued to throw out feelers for peace, disclaiming again on February 15th the designs attributed to him about Poland, but threatening war if English trade with Russia continued. He thought other differences might be arranged; it seemed a pity that a hundred thousand men should die because of a difference about the colour of a ribbon.⁶

Also on February 18th the Duc de Bassano instructed Lauriston, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, to propose or welcome the idea of a Congress on the Niemen or the Oder; to offer a conditional arrest of the French advance; or in the last resort to propose a personal interview between the two Emperors. Napoleon, he said, would always welcome anything that could prevent the war.⁷ There is no evidence that these proposals were insincere, yet in partisan histories, like Alison's, they do not figure at all, being in fact unknown before Baron Ernouf published the results of his researches in the French archives. If the idea be sound that truth always

¹ Tatitscheff, Alexander I. et Napoléon, 457.

² *ib.*, 462.

³ Memoirs, III., 123.

⁴ *ib.*, III., 128.

⁵ Ernouf, 374, 5.

⁶ Tatitscheff, 583.

⁷ Ernouf, 343, 4.

conquers in the end, that end is apt to be so distant in time as to deprive truth's triumph of all utility.

The steady refusal of the Czar for some fifteen months to make other than evasive replies to French requests for definite statements of satisfaction for his grievances makes it probable that he meant war from the first. What ultimately decided him seems to have been his treaty of alliance with Sweden in the early days of April, 1812. In Napoleon's plans for a Russian war the assumed assistance of Sweden on one side of Russia, and of Turkey on the other had filled a large place; but in both cases disappointment awaited him. Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden, found a plausible pretext for his long meditated defection from the cause of his original country by Napoleon's occupation of Pomerania in January, 1812; for though Pomerania's disregard of the condition of excluding British goods, on which she had been restored to Sweden in 1810, justified the occupation, the consequential loss of Sweden from the French side and its transfer to the Russian side at once emboldened Alexander to reply on April 8th to Napoleon's overtures in terms calculated to make a settlement impossible. Nothing less than the evacuation of Prussia and of Swedish Pomerania and of all strong places east of the Elbe would now satisfy him; and this without any equivalent concessions on his part but some commercial promises of most uncertain quality. The Czar by this time had given himself up wholly to the Russian war party, and to the foreign war instigators who abounded at his Court; and on April 8th he sent Serdobin to Paris to deliver through Prince Kurakin his ultimate terms. Serdobin reached Paris on April 24th, and after several discussions the Prince on April 30th delivered a note which Napoleon regarded as a declaration of war: "To arrive at a state of peace with France, it was essential that a neutral country should exist between her and Russia. Consequently, the first base of every negotiation could only be the formal

engagement of the entire evacuation of the Prussian States, of all the strong places, etc. This engagement could alone render still possible a settlement, and it was only after acceptance of this demand that the ambassador would be allowed to promise that the settlement might contain certain concessions, from which was formally excepted the trade with neutrals, which Russia could never renounce."¹ Thus concessions about Franco-Russian commerce, or the Duchy of Oldenberg were made conditional on a preliminary demand which made further negotiation impossible: the evacuation of Prussia.

On April 12th the Czar told Czartoryski in a letter that he thought war inevitable; Napoleon, he said, wanted all Russian trade with neutrals to be stopped, yet asked that prohibited French articles of luxury, too dear for Russians to buy, should be freely imported; and such pretensions were incompatible with the honour of Russia. Napoleon on his side said that the evacuation of Prussia, so imperiously demanded, was incompatible with the honour of France. And, when Governments talk of honour, war is always in the wind.

Alexander was the first to move to the headquarters of his army at Wilna, the Lithuanian capital, in April; Napoleon leaving Paris for Dresden on May 9th. A few days before he sent Count Narbonne to Wilna with two letters, one from himself to the Czar, the other from the Duc de Bassano to Romanzov, with renewed assurances of a wish for peace. These letters were dated April 25th, but were not despatched till May 3rd, in order to indicate that they were written before the Czar's ultimatum, which must have precluded all further parley, was officially known at Paris.² The letter of May 3rd from the Duc de Bassano to Narbonne is cited by Tatitscheff to show that the Narbonne mission was insincere and only intended to gain time,³ and the French historian Vandal attributes these letters to a wish to delay a Russian

¹ Ernouf's *Maret*, 352.

² *ib.*, 354.

³ *ib.*, 586.

offensive and to retain the offensive for himself.¹ But the Duc de Narbonne always asserted Napoleon's sincerity, and, claiming the idea as his own, said that Napoleon had reluctantly assented to it.² When Prince Kurakin, who personally wished for peace, received no answer to the Russian ultimatum, his belief in Napoleon's sincerity underwent a rapid change, and, on learning that he was starting for Dresden in two days, he, without any authorisation from the Czar, on May 7th demanded his passports; again on May 11th, and again on May 26th. On May 19th Alexander from Wilna acknowledged Napoleon's letter sent by Narbonne, and assured him of his unchanged kind feelings towards him, and of his paramount desire to avoid war;³ but always on the assumption of compliance with his demands.

On May 20th the Duc de Bassano instructed Lauriston to go at once from St. Petersburg to Wilna, and to insist on getting explanations from Romanzov which might still leave a way open to a settlement; but Lauriston was not allowed to leave the capital.⁴

This refusal to see Lauriston, coupled with the discovery that the Kurakin demands about Prussia were known in Berlin, London and St. Petersburg, so angered Napoleon that he at last sent Prince Kurakin his passports and ordered Lauriston to demand his (June 12-16). On June 24th he crossed the Niemen into Russia. Alexander at once proclaimed that there could be no talk of peace whilst a single Frenchman was on the sacred soil; and on June 25th he wrote to Napoleon his last letter. In this he mentioned the strange fact that a letter just received from Lauriston showed that Napoleon considered war to have begun when Prince Kurakin first demanded his passports, *i.e.*, since May 7th. But the Prince, he said, had not been authorised to demand his passports, and as soon as

¹ III., 384, 5, 461.

² Ernouf, 353.

³ Tatitscheff, 586.

⁴ Ernouf, 362.

Alexander knew of it he expressed his strong disapproval and bade him remain at his post ; therefore, if Napoleon was not determined to shed his people's blood for such a misunderstanding, and would retire from Russian territory, he would overlook what was past and a peace might still be possible.¹

This letter he sent on June 27th by General Balachof, Minister of Police, to Napoleon, now installed in the same house at Wilna that had lately been occupied by himself. But the unlikelihood of Napoleon's recrossing the Niemen, without the slightest intimation of any concessions from the Russian ultimatum, suggests that by this letter Alexander only aimed at getting credit for a wish for peace whilst insisting on a condition which he knew would prevent it.²

Of the historic interview between Napoleon and Balachof a most graphic account has been drawn by Tatitscheff from the Russian Archives. Things had gone badly since the morning of the crossing of the Niemen, when a fall from his horse, shying at a hare at its feet, seemed to Napoleon himself and others an inauspicious omen for the campaign. Napoleon was in no pacific mood. What chiefly incensed him was the imperious Kurakin note, a note, he said, that could hardly have been presented to the smallest Court in Europe, not even to Sweden ! All the Courts he had consulted regarded the note as a declaration of war. The Czar, he said, had bad advisers ; men like the Swedish General Armfeld, a debauchee ; Benningsen, the regicide ; the Prussian Stein, driven from his country as a good-for-nothing, who would all drive him to the abyss. Did they suppose that he had been at such prodigious expense and put off his journey to Spain simply to come to look at the river Niemen and not to cross it ? Russia did not want war ; nor even did England, which had no wish to see Russia weakened ; the only persons who wanted it were

¹ Tatitscheff, 588.

² Vandal, III., 495, 516.

Alexander's counsellors. What could Russia expect from such a war? The loss of her Polish provinces, and this time the annexation of Prussia to France? Why not try to come to an understanding? It might be that he would comply with the Czar's desires. Let the Czar know that the war had begun, but that he was not against peace. Let Lauriston be sent to his headquarters to explain the Russian wishes.

Balachof dined with Napoleon the same evening, and after the meal there was some stormy talking followed by a scene between Napoleon and Caulaincourt. The latter had been a persistent pessimist about the war, earning for himself thereby the nickname of a pro-Russian. On this occasion, partly in anger, partly in chaff, Napoleon told him that Alexander had made a Russian of him: an insult which Caulaincourt strongly resented at the time in language that another than Napoleon might have found it difficult to listen to with patience. Happily, the master of legions was also master of himself.¹ But to Balachof he made no approach to a promise to leave Russia, and the envoy was dismissed on a note of defiance. On July 1st Napoleon wrote again to the Czar: he was still ready to listen to peace proposals; but he would not leave Russia till Alexander had released himself from the influence of the men who had always been the enemies of Napoleon's family, his glory, and his Empire.

The Russian war party derived great encouragement from the treaty of peace at Bucharest between Russia and Turkey, signed on May 28th and ratified on July 14th. This peace, and that between Russia and England, was a great diplomatic triumph for Stratford Canning, in later life the Lord Stratford de Redcliffe of Crimean fame, who, left at Constantinople as our ambassador, at the age of twenty-three, and without help or instruction from Lord Wellesley, our Foreign Secretary, succeeded with infinite difficulty in reconciling Turkey with Russia, and so

¹ Vandal, III., 527-30.

releasing large Russian forces from service on the Danube for service against France, and relieving her from all fear of an enemy allied with France in her rear, as Napoleon had designed. During the two years, 1810 to 1812, he had managed through neutral agents at St. Petersburg to bring the Russian Court round to a policy of peace both with England and with Turkey which entirely disconcerted Napoleon's plans and led ultimately to his overthrow. Nor was it an easy task to persuade the Sultan to make a peace which was certain to displease Napoleon. To do so Stratford Canning resorted to an expedient which he "had long kept in reserve. Mr. Adair (our previous ambassador) had obtained from a secret source and consigned to my hands when he went away, a plan for invading Turkey which had been prepared at Vienna prospectively, in reliance no doubt on the French Emperor's concurrence, and with a view to partition at the first convenient juncture."¹ This revelation of a scheme between Austria and France to partition Turkey had the desired effect in estranging the Turkish Government from France. Its potency provokes astonishment at the long delay that passed before resorting to so efficacious a weapon. Was the "secret source" open to any suspicion? Was Adair, and consequently Canning, the dupe of some forger? Baron Ernouf alludes to a proposal of a division of the Ottoman Empire in a forged letter from Napoleon to Alexander as being used to alienate the Sultan from France, and the similarity of the object in view and of its result tends to throw some doubt on the authenticity of the document on which Stratford Canning relied.² For can there have been two documents: a genuine one implicating Austria, and another forged one implicating Russia, in a scheme for Turkey's partition, and each successful in alienating Turkey from its French attachment?

¹ Poole's *Life of S. Canning*, I., 165.

² Ernouf's *Maret*, 323.

Each side counted, of course, on victory. Knesebeck, the Prussian, testified to the belief of the Russians in their invincibility, and to Alexander's annoyance when he told him that 300,000 men were insufficient for a war with France. One has to remember that the Russian population at this time, according to a proclamation by the Czar, was only thirty millions.¹ Napoleon's confidence of victory, as revealed in his conversation with Balachof, amounted almost to pity for his enemy. He believed in a short and sharp campaign, like that of 1807. It was for this reason that before leaving Paris he had rejected the ideas of a two years' campaign; for short wars and quick peaces were what he loved, says Maret; at Smolensko there was no question between advancing and pausing, but only between marching on Moscow or St. Petersburg.² In this sense Jomini's remark may be true, that Napoleon, whom he spoke of as "at once the most decided and the most undecided of men," had hardly fixed his plans for the campaign at its beginning. Moscow was but a milestone on the road to India, and the plunder of Moscow would both pay for the war and enrich the soldiers. The festivities that May at the French Court at Dresden, graced by the treacherous royalties of Prussia and Austria and by many smaller German princes, seemed a fitting prelude to a war which promised so sure a return in spoil and pleasure. The general expectation in England as elsewhere was that Russia would be defeated. For against France, with Austrian and Prussian auxiliaries, what other result was probable?

But of course a Franco-Russian war would be to our advantage, as inevitably diverting French forces from Spain, and it was for this reason presumably that during 1811 attempts had been taken to dissolve the Franco-Russian alliance. Such attempts were, of course, of an indirect nature with a Power with which we were still nominally at war. Since September, 1811, Liston, our

¹ Ann. Reg., 1812, II., 431.

² Ernouf, 418.

ambassador at the Porte, and the Corsican Pozzo di Borgo, so alarmed the Russian Court with the alleged hostile intentions of France that after the despatch of each courier the Duc de Bassano had to send disclaimers of such intentions. Edward Thornton, the diplomatist, was sent in the summer of 1811 on a secret mission to Sweden,¹ during which he held secret conferences with certain Russian officers at Reval.² We remained at war with Russia till July 18th, 1812, when we made a fresh treaty of friendship and alliance with her,³ but our diplomacy hoped for a Franco-Russian war. Lord Castlereagh, on July 1st, 1812, disclaimed all idea of having instigated Russia to war with France: our language to her had always been that of caution, not of excitement; "it was always signified to her, that, if she were to determine on war, she must look only to her own resources, not to this country."⁴ Canning rightly interpreted this to mean that we had held out to her every possible encouragement short of direct military and financial support.⁵

It would seem from this that Castlereagh's policy had been to encourage Russia to a war she was unlikely to win, in order to relieve us of our difficulties in Spain. Would it not have been better in April of this year at least to have tried to make a peace out of Napoleon's offer? For a peace was easily within our grasp which would have satisfied our wishes about Spain, and saved Europe from the appalling miseries of the Russian campaign. Francis Jackson had but a poor opinion of his chief at the Foreign Office: "as to Lord Castlereagh," he wrote on July 20th, 1812, "I expect no good, either public or private, from anything he will do. Circumstances, I trust, will be in favour of the country, for I have long known that he is utterly incapable of conducting its affairs either with honour or advantage."⁶ A severe but mistaken commentary!

¹ Ernouf, 321.

³ Parl. Deb., XXIV., 174.

⁵ *ib.*, XXIV., 66.

² Jackson's Diaries, I., 318.

⁴ *ib.*, XXIII., 1147.

⁶ Bath Archives, I., 402.

Were it possible to cure human nature of its ineradicable belief in the omnipotence of military force, the French invasion of Russia should have provided the remedy. For, deducting the 300,000 men serving in Spain, Napoleon had at his disposal for war some 900,000 men,¹ though Gourgaud puts the official figures of those that crossed the Niemen at 155,400 French and 175,000 allied forces,² not 445,220 in all, as Ségur puts them. Such an army seemed as invincible as the Athenian fleet which in the Peloponnesian war, 415 years before Christ, sailed so gaily and confidently to the conquest of Syracuse, most of its host to perish miserably in the Syracusan mines. Napoleon had a fixed idea that his last war was before him, and that after a certain victory he would get such a mastery of the Continent as would enable him to enforce peace on the world.³ In his frequent arguments with Caulaincourt or the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, who in vain urged counsels of peace, he disclaimed all desire of conquest for conquest's sake ; everything was subordinate to his desire to force the English to a peace by a victory which should compel them to accept the principle of the freedom of the seas.⁴ In any case he achieved a wonderful feat in bringing so many nationalities to serve under one flag : Austrians, Prussians, Poles, Spaniards, Italians, Danes, Dutch and Swiss. Many indeed of Oudinot's Swiss regiment had come to the ranks in chains, nor were the total numbers any index of national sympathy with the cause they were forced to espouse ; but there had been no such triumph over the principle of nationality since the time when for sixteen years Hannibal had commanded in Italy a polyglot army of Libyans, Iberians, Ligurians, Celts, Phœnicians, Italians and Greeks : ⁵ both cases showing how superficial is the tie of race and

¹ Vandal, III., 337.

² Napoléon et la Guerre en Russie, 90.

³ Mollien, III., 66, 7.

⁴ Vandal, III., 339-41.

⁵ Polybius, XI., 19.

language that is used to bind men together in antagonistic and fighting nationalities.

The latter half of 1812 probably concentrated into a few months more of human suffering than any similar period in history. The campaign was nothing but fire and famine and carnage on a colossal scale. It is said that the example of Wellington in Portugal caused Gen. Pfuhl, the German strategist in the Russian service, to advocate a retrogressive strategy against Napoleon as the best ; and that Alexander became a convert to his views.¹ But was it a purely voluntary strategy ! In any case the tactics of a retreating defensive were identically the same tactics that the Scythian ancestors of the Russians had adopted in ancient times against the Persian invasion under Darius.²

At the call of patriotism they burnt their homes in town or village for hundreds of miles, leaving a desert to supply food to their invaders, and finding in the starving of their foe a quicker dissolvent of their numbers than battle. Not that there were not battles enough ; as at Smolensko, taken by the French on August 17th, or at the terrific field of Borodino on September 7th, for which, as at Eylau, both sides sang as good Christians their pious *Te Deums*. Those who had seen Borodino, wrote the Russian Doctorof, had seen the infernal regions. The Russian peace party wished to stop the war ; and there was great anger against the Grand Duke Constantine and Count Romanzov for their pacifist pleadings. But Alexander was more under the influence of Sir Robert Wilson than under that of his brother Constantine or of his mother or wife. Wilson directed his wavering will, writing on September 3rd, " I have been playing a bold and high part on this stage ; I have been the organ of the Russian army and nation ; and I hope one of the best friends a sovereign ever had in a foreigner." The Czar pledged himself to Wilson to continue the war even if he lost Moscow and St. Petersburg, whilst he could find one

¹ Vandal, III., 165-7.

² Herodotus, IV., 120-125.

other man to stand by him.¹ Yet Wilson was a man of whom his fellow-diplomatist, Francis Jackson, wrote on April 13th, 1812, that "it would be madness to entrust to him any political business of importance,"² and that he was "too harum-scarum for a diplomatist."³ His business was to keep the Czar up to the war-mark.

Had Alexander only been guided after Borodino by Constantine as he was after Friedland, instead of by Wilson, Moscow conceivably might have been plucked from the burning in those fateful days after the French entry on September 17th, when the ashes of Moscow, given by Rostopchin and the Russian nobles to the flames, were carried by the wind to a distance of thirty-five miles. The loss of Moscow cost Russia £50,000,000, and indirectly relegated to the dim future that emancipation of the serfs for which Alexander had told Savary in 1807 that, had Russian civilisation been more advanced, he would have risked his life.⁴ The fire of Moscow put an effective stopper on all such dreams. On September 20th Napoleon wrote to the Czar that for a letter from him before or even after Borodino he would have stayed his march and not entered Moscow,⁵ but Alexander was now deaf to the voices of his still not inconsiderable peace party. He said that rather than sign a shameful peace he would let his beard grow down to his waist and go and dig potatoes in Siberia. But there need have been no question of a shameful peace; for Napoleon was far too clear-sighted not to see that peace for the safety of his army had become a necessity.

The encouraging news from Spain had great influence in protracting the Franco-Russian war. Wellington had won his great victory at Salamanca on July 22nd, at a cost to our Spanish allies of only 8, but to ourselves and the Portuguese of over 5,000. On August 11th King Joseph had to leave his capital; the next day the people

¹ Diary, I., 156, 7.

² Bath Archives, I., 348.

³ *ib.*, I., 222.

⁴ Tatitscheff, 266.

⁵ Corresp. XXIV., No. 19, 213.

of Madrid received the British troops "with enthusiastic joy," whilst the capture of the Retiro on August 13th put at our disposal the immense military resources in that great arsenal. Spain had become more and more of a hornet's nest to the French, and, though Napoleon, before starting northwards, had put all his generals under Joseph's supreme command, with Jourdan for his major-general, Joseph could never get himself obeyed. He complained that Salamanca was lost because Marshal Marmont (the Duc de Raguse) disobeyed his instructions not to fight before the arrival of 14,000 reinforcements under himself.¹ And the capture by the English of Seville on August 27th, following that of Madrid, had had the great military effect of causing the French after two and a half years to raise the siege of Cadiz from the land side, and to evacuate the southern province of Andalusia. All this gave great encouragement in Russia, where it was not known, nor could be foreseen, that Wellington, on the expectation of a fresh force from France under Masséna, had to vacate Madrid on September 1st; and, after two defeated attempts to take the town of Burgos, had to make a very disastrous retreat to winter quarters at Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington said that the want of discipline shown by his army on this occasion surpassed that of any army on which he had ever served, or of which he had ever read, and that on the retreats from Madrid and Burgos the complete loss of control by his officers over their men resulted in outrages of the worst description. Between their conquerors and their deliverers the unfortunate natives were between the upper and the lower millstone. The month that intervened between leaving Burgos and reaching Ciudad Rodrigo on November 18th diminished Wellington's army by 7,000 men.

Napoleon continued from Moscow to make overtures of peace. He would have bought it at the cost of giving

¹ Du Casse, *Les Frères Rois*, 53, 56.

the Czar a free hand in Turkey, and Constantinople into the bargain ; but the Czar, strangely attributing the fire to Napoleon, would return no answer. Thiers acquits Alexander of all knowledge of the intended burning,¹ but a pamphlet by Meyendorf, an eminent Russian diplomat, in 1838, asserts that it was deliberately planned in the Winter Palace beforehand.²

Then began on October 22nd that famous retreat of the French and their allies, of which the misery has been too often told to need repetition. Sir Robert Wilson declared that the Russian peasants were so infuriated with the French that they would often buy the French prisoners of the Cossacks in order to have the pleasure of putting them to death ; sometimes they would bury them alive, as they buried fifty at Selino ; sometimes they burned them alive, as they burnt fifty at Wiasme.³ The repetition of the number fifty is suspicious, and there is comfort in Francis Jackson's comment on Wilson's stories that they were "not to be received as pure gospel."⁴ Wilson also reports on the other side a dreadful massacre of the French at Moscow after the return of the Russians, "the greater part convalescent sick and wounded ; but the Russians had great wrongs to avenge."⁵

Wilson's part in the pursuit was to see that it did not slacken, and to prevent all attempts at a negotiation. When on October 10th, Napoleon wished to negotiate with the Russian Commander Kutusov, Wilson wrote : "I have rendered most important service and prevented a successful negotiation for the retreat of the enemy."⁶ He attributed the slowness of Kutusov's pursuit to sympathy with the enemy, and wrote, "I can scarcely behave with common decency in his presence. His feebleness outrages me to such a degree that I have declared, if he remains Commander-in-Chief, that I must retire

¹ XIX., 364-6. ² Ernouf, 431. ³ Diary, I., 174, 200, 209, 214.

⁴ Bath Archives, I., 447, December 22nd, 1812.

⁵ Diary, I., 207. ⁶ *ib.*, I., 186.

from this army." On November 5th the misconduct of the Marshal made him "quite wild." Wilson thought that there were times when he himself could easily have finished the pursuit by the capture of the French army. Possibly; but it is curious to find him in a position that enabled him to demand the dismissal of a Russian general, whose appointment in August to the chief command had met with universal approval.

The end of that disastrous adventure is well-known; the consternation caused by the unexpected return of Napoleon to Paris on December 18th. A Russian proclamation spoke of 140,000 prisoners as having been made from the grand Army, and of not more than 30,000 as likely to reach their homes again out of the invading army of 300,000.¹ Whatever the real numbers, the military disaster was overwhelming, and it needed all the composure and confidence, real or assumed, of Napoleon to save the Empire from immediate subjection by its enemies. But it would be an error to think that the Russian campaign had been forced by Napoleon on a reluctant nation. It is true that at the beginning of the year large numbers had been opposed to another war, but even they were soon so carried away by the general intoxication of glory that, apart from the special recruiting for the war, never had there been a greater number of volunteers for it, and that from the richest and oldest families in France.²

THE AMERICAN WAR

As if the State had not enough on its hands with the war in Europe, it drifted in June of this year into war with America. The quarrel had begun with the Orders in Council, of which James Stephen, M.P., a leading Tory Evangelical of the day, was the parent by his pamphlet on "The War in Disguise;" Whitbread often spoke of them as Stephens' "darling offspring."

¹ Ann. Reg., 1813, II., 389.

² Mollien, Memoires, III., 131.

For five years the Whigs had inveighed against these Orders, not altogether without effect. An Order in Council of April, 1809, had so far modified the Orders of November 11th, 1807, as to limit their application to France and countries associated with her. But both France and America remained unappeased. The French contention, that enemy goods under a neutral flag should be immune from capture ; that neutral goods under an enemy flag should not be seizable ; that only arms and warlike stores should be contraband (not ship-timber and naval articles) ; and that only ports actually invested should be treated as blockaded, though since accepted by most nations as the law of war, was then regarded on our side as "extravagant demands." France was only willing to revoke the Berlin and Milan decrees on the acceptance of these principles.

Our Government, however, on April 21st, 1812, undertook to revoke its Orders as soon as the French decrees were authentically and unconditionally withdrawn.¹

But, as regards America, the French decrees had been withdrawn by a decree of April 28th, 1811, from November 1st, 1811 ; in consideration of the American decree of March 2nd, 1811, by which Congress closed American ports against British ships and commerce,² and it seems marvellous that our Government appears to have been ignorant of such a fact till the decree was shown to Lord Castlereagh on May 20th, 1812, a year later. On the strength of it the Prince Regent's Declaration of June 23rd, 1812, revoked from August 1st, 1812, the Orders for American ships and cargoes, conditionally on the admission of British armed vessels and merchantmen into American harbours on the same terms as those of France.³

The revocation was an immense triumph for the Whig Opposition, and more especially for Brougham, who had

¹ Ann. Reg., 1812, II., 338-42.

² Ann. Reg., 1812, 423.

³ Parl. Deb., XXII., 853.

earned great popularity among the English commercial classes for his pertinacious attacks on these ill-advised Orders, which had led to widespread distress in our large towns and to riots on an alarming scale. Yet the Tory Government had stuck recklessly to these Orders as the sheet-anchor of the State, though of the witnesses from thirty large towns only one gave his opinion that they were uninjurious to commerce.

On June 23rd, 1812, Brougham spoke handsomely of the conciliatory disposition towards America shown by the Government's revocation of the Orders. He thanked the Government for their "frank and manly conduct"; prophesied the revival "of our expiring trades and manufactures" from their revocation, and hoped that America would receive it in an equally conciliatory spirit.¹ But by one of those unfortunate coincidences which have so often told against peace, America had declared war against us before they heard of this concession to their wishes. This was on June 18th, 1812. It was said that President Madison wished to distinguish his term of office by the annexation of Canada, and undoubtedly the profits from privateering tempted to war in certain of the States. But it is difficult to believe that even these temptations can have led America lightly into war, with a navy of not more than four frigates, and with a coast-line of 1,500 miles exposed to the ships of the greatest naval power in the world. An earlier revocation of the Orders might have prevented the war party in America from becoming dangerous; yet to delay a settlement had been our deliberate policy. Francis Jackson, our ambassador to the States in 1810, advised Lord Wellesley at the Foreign Office to procrastinate negotiations, and Lord Malmesbury told George Jackson that he believed Lord Wellesley had followed this strange advice.² Nor was a wish for war altogether absent on

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIII., 716.

² Bath Archives, I., 109, 147.

our side ; for in February, 1811, the mercantile classes at Hull are described as " all very desirous of a war with America." ¹

The American case for war was given in a long message to Congress. The foremost complaint was the seizure of American sailors on American vessels to serve on British warships ; a maritime right that was an intolerable wrong. Nor was the objection unreasonable which protested against American commerce being liable to plunder as part of a retaliatory policy against France. The French Government having intimated that on the repeal of the British Order of May, 1806, it would withdraw its decrees, the message complained that the British refusal to rescind the blockade or declare it annulled prevented such a reciprocal withdrawal of measures against neutrals as would have re-established maritime harmony. And it was infinitely to be deplored that that course was not taken.

The new war had not lasted long before efforts were made for peace. On September 30th, 1812, Admiral Warren addressed a conciliatory proposal for an armistice to Monroe, Secretary of State. But the answer of the latter showed that the impressment of American seamen was still the chief obstacle. The injustice of thus forcing American citizens into a foreign service was bitterly felt. It was obvious that if the States prohibited the employment of British seamen, there could be no longer any pretext for searching American vessels for them ; but, although this proposal was made, it was received with suspicion, nor did any pacification result. ²

The attack on Canada resulted in failure, but two fine frigates, the *Guerrière* and the *Macedonian*, were captured by the enemy, and Canning said that their loss produced " a sensation in the country scarcely to be equalled by the most violent convulsion of nature." ³

¹ *ib.*, I., 221.

² Ann. Reg., 1812, II., 440-2.

³ Parl. Deb., XXIV., 643.

Our newly elected Parliament met on November 24th, 1812, and six days later Whitbread, the indefatigable pacifist, moved an amendment to the Address, to the effect that at a time "when the glory of the British arms transcended the glory of all former periods in the situation of the contest between Russia and France," direct negotiations for a general peace should be opened with all the belligerents.¹ It was of course negatived, on the common platitude that such a course would be a sueing for peace and therefore debasing to the nation.² But there could have been no better moment for ending the war than when Napoleon was returning from the Russian campaign with his vast army reduced to 42,000; and when, with regard to the Peninsular war, the truth probably lay halfway between Lord Wellesley's argument that the campaign had failed from lack of reinforcements,³ and Lord Liverpool's comment on it as "the most glorious we had had."⁴

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIV., 102.

³ Parl. Deb., XXV., 24-65.

² *ib.*, XXIV., 122.

⁴ *ib.*, XXV., 87.

CHAPTER XII

1813. The Falling Empire

So certain did it seem, at the beginning of 1813, that France was crushed, despite the fact of Austria and Prussia being still nominally her allies, that the Comte de Lille on February 1st issued a proclamation as Louis XVIII. from his English asylum at Hartwell, near Aylesbury. What fears, he asked, could deter France from recognising in the re-establishment of his lawful authority her only pledge of union, peace and happiness? What doubt could there be of his paternal intentions? All who took the oath of fidelity to him should be left undisturbed in their posts; the Code, "polluted by the name of Napoleon," should remain in force, except where it ran counter to the doctrines of religion. The Senate should remain; there should be no disturbance of the land settlement; the army should continue to enjoy its existing pay; and the conscription, so destructive to the hope of families, should be abolished.¹

The dethroned King of Sweden, Gustavus IV., was the only monarch of his time who stood out for Louis' restoration as the main aim of the war, or as an attainable end. But he was a man of whom Napoleon justly said that his head was "*près de bonnet*"²; in other words, that he was a semi-lunatic. Yet the English press had puffed Gustavus to an absurd degree, till a certain Thomson, travelling to Sweden to form his own judgment, found himself reluctantly forced to yield to universal Swedish evidence that the opinion of the British newspapers was baseless. It did not indeed prove the King's insanity

¹ Ann. Reg., 1813, II., 390.

² Tatitscheff, 240.

that he believed Napoleon to be the Beast of the Revelation: that being so common a delusion of weak minds; but Gustavus actually regulated his conduct on the belief, and was so sure that he himself was the prophesied conqueror, seated on a white horse, who was to destroy the Beast, that with his own hand he painted himself on a white horse trampling on the Beast. When besieged by the French in Stralsund, he for some time expected the visible appearance of a delivering angel, who was to be four German miles in height; nor did he consult for his own safety by a retreat to the island of Rugen till the French batteries were about to open. Such was this hero of the British press, who for some time was our steadfast ally! ¹

In the numerous petitions for peace from several English towns presented by Members to Parliament, with the usual apologetic dissent from such an idea, this proclamation of the Comte de Lille as Louis XVIII. met with some severe criticism, significant of the feeling of the time. Lord Holland on April 2nd expressed the belief that no Englishman would be disposed to spend sixpence for a restoration; and he wished that the Government, by a declaration of its real war aims, would dissociate itself from any connivance with such a policy.² Whitbread on the same day advocated the strongest resistance, if it appeared that the Government lent its countenance to "a project so desperate and chimerical."³ Castlereagh replied that Ministers were no party whatever to the Proclamation; but Stephen's remark, that "from his soul and with all his heart he highly approved of it," doubtless expressed the general feeling of the country; as was further shown by the republication of the Proclamation in the English Ministerial press in November.⁴ The restoration of the Bourbon line in France was always the underlying hope of the English ruling classes; for who

¹ Ann. Reg., II., 454.

² Parl. Deb., XXVI., 517.

³ *ib.*, XXVI., 534.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XXVII., 153.

could foresee that such restoration would bring upon France that White Terror of revenge which only in the degree of quantity was to fall short of the worst atrocities of the early Revolution ?

Considering the important part Lord Cathcart played in the diplomacy of 1813, it is curious to read George Jackson's comment on his appointment to St. Petersburg. "What a moment," he writes on January 1st, 1813, "to have Lord Cathcart to direct Alexander. I trust that Bonaparte may not even yet cajole him, or most of John Bull's high hopes and speculations will be baulked."¹ There was little faith in Alexander's tenacity, and it was a craze of the day that soldiers, though by their education more inclined to promote war than peace, made the best diplomatists. When Sir Charles Stewart, the third Lord Londonderry, another of the gallantest of soldiers, was sent on a similar ambassadorial mission to Berlin, Mrs. Jackson thus wrote to her son George on March 25th: "I am quite tired of generals being sent out as negotiators; and there never came any good of it yet."² A most intelligent lady, Mrs. Jackson!

But she proved wrong in this instance. Sir Charles took to Prussia a promise of the one thing needful at that moment: money. Frederick William III. had felt some compunction about the wisdom, or even the morality, of violating his treaty of the previous year with France. When the Duc de Bassano, on his return from Russia, visited the King in Berlin, he described him on Christmas Day, 1812, as firm to the alliance and ready to do everything to justify Napoleon's confidence. His Chancellor Hardenberg expressed himself in the same sense,³ probably with less sincerity. And it is probable that the King would have stuck to the French alliance, had Napoleon acceded to his request for money in return for 50 or 60,000 men, or relieved him of some of the crushing war contribution of £3,700,000, levied on Prussia for the late Russian

¹ Diaries, II., 2.

² *ib.*, II., 31.

³ Ernouf, 483.

campaign. But Napoleon had ceased to believe the King sincere ; with the result that the King threw himself into the arms of Russia ; Sir Robert Wilson says that he would have been dethroned otherwise;¹ and thus the treaty of Kalisch, ratified on March 1st, committed both countries to joint efforts against France, and to an endeavour to bring Austria and England into the same boat. England lost no time in complying. Immense stores were sent to arm and clothe a nation so restored to her good graces ; but it was money that Prussia needed for her salvation. Sir Charles, reaching Dresden towards the end of April, agreed to subsidise Prussia and Russia with a million each, with two millions to Sweden, and with £500,000 for the expense of the Russian fleet, in return for a Russian army of 200,000 men and a Prussian one of 100,000 men in the field. Despite the Prussian enthusiasm for the war of Liberation, it is open to doubt whether, but for British gold, Prussia would have maintained her existence in this second war with Napoleon. And so of Russia ; for Sir Robert Wilson wrote of Prussia's signing of the Kalisch treaty as most fortunate, since the Russians then were " quite expended," and had no more than 60,000 effectives under arms.²

But England's love for Prussia was not altogether disinterested. Next to fighting for our maritime right to search neutral ships for enemy property (a right surrendered in 1856), Hanover was our strongest motive for prolonging the war and refusing all overtures of peace. Lord Grey on June 18th, 1813, expressed the opinion that it would have been better for this country had Hanover been at the bottom of the sea,³ nor is it likely that he was singular in this opinion. And now the Prussian subsidy afforded a good opportunity for getting something for Hanover out of Prussia. Hildesheim and Minden and Raumberg were demanded, but Hardenberg

¹ Diary, II., 79.

² Diary, I., 291.

³ Parl. Deb., XXVI., 739.

on May 1st told Sir Charles that, though Hildesheim might be ceded, he would not cede the other portions, even were the liberality of England trebled.¹ George Jackson disapproved altogether: "for us to put in a pitiful, fiddling stipulation about Hildesheim, etc., for Hanover is what I must ever consider as disgraceful and impolitic."²

Austria less readily took the Russian bait. Though Austria and Russia had made common cause in 1805, the Russian assumption of military superiority had given such offence to the Austrians that the soldiers in the two armies hated one another more than either really hated the French.³ The two Powers had no real friendship, but after the French disaster of 1812, the common motive of dividing the Duchy of Warsaw drew them together, and an armistice with Russia in December, 1812, at Pultusk, was the beginning of Austria's defection from France. England offered Austria a subsidy of ten millions to put her armies on a war footing, if she would join the new League, but Metternich preferred at present to hold his hand, and even sent Wessenberg to England, overtly to propose Austrian mediation to end the war, but covertly to take measures for Austria's accession to it.⁴

THE ANGLO-SWEDISH TREATY

A very remarkable treaty was signed at Stockholm between England and Sweden on March 3rd, 1813, supporting a treaty made between Russia and Sweden on March 24th, 1812. This latter was one of the most flagrant treaties of partition ever made. Russia, at that time dreading the French war, had every reason to make Sweden her friend, in order to obtain from her military aid, and to release Russian troops from Finland, which she had annexed in 1810. So, although both Russia and Sweden were then at peace with Denmark, Russia agreed

¹ Jackson's Diaries, II., 86.

² *ib.*, II., 63.

³ Letters of Alexander and Czartoriski, 39.

⁴ Alison IX., 152, 3.

to compensate Sweden for the loss of Finland by giving to her Norway, which from time immemorial had belonged to Denmark ! Sweden, then under the rule of Napoleon's old Marshal, Bernadotte, who by a strange freak of fortune had become Crown Prince of Sweden, protested against the possibility of Sweden's assisting with 30,000 men a Russian force of 20,000 in an attack on the German coast, whilst Norway remained a possible enemy behind her, and therefore Alexander guaranteed to Sweden the peaceable possession of Norway after its acquisition either by negotiation or by joint military action ! Negotiation was preferable ; and if Denmark would consent to the cession " for ever " of Norway to Sweden, compensation was to be offered her somewhere in Germany ; otherwise she was to be treated as an enemy. And on August 30th, 1812, Russia agreed to increase her force to 35,000 for the primary object of the conquest of Norway.¹

Thus did the pious Alexander, with his deep concern for the liberation of Europe and the rights of small nations, propose to benefit Sweden at the expense of Denmark, whatever Denmark's wishes in the matter might be.

With this iniquitous scheme the two robber Powers endeavoured to get England to fall in, sending her the treaty in July, 1812. The Russians were then flying before the French, and Castlereagh's answer was that the Government, unable to see anything " that merited reproach in the conduct of the Governments of Russia and Sweden," agreed to accede to the treaty, with a view to enable Sweden to divert some portion of the French forces from their advance into Russia, and for this purpose, partially effected, gave a subsidy.

In 1813 the situation had changed. In February the French army was a wreck, and the Swedes, who the year before had hesitated to attack the rear of a French army

¹ Parl. Deb., XXVI., 677.

of 350,000 men would take the risk for a fair equivalent. So Russia pleaded : and what Sweden would like would be the island of Guadeloupe, and a handsome subsidy.

Hence the Anglo-Swedish treaty ; without the consent or knowledge of Parliament Guadeloupe was ceded to the King of Sweden, " and to his successors to the Crown ;" a subsidy of a million, payable monthly, was to be paid to Sweden ; and in return 30,000 Swedes were to act with Russian troops under Bernadotte on the Continent against France. By Article 2 we acceded to the Russian and Swedish Convention of the previous year about Norway : " His Majesty will not only not oppose any obstacle to the annexation and union in perpetuity of the kingdom of Norway, but also will assist the views of His Majesty the King of Sweden to that effect, either by his good offices, or by employing, if it should be necessary, his naval co-operation in concert with the Swedish or Russian forces. It is nevertheless to be understood that recourse shall not be had to force for effecting the union of Norway to Sweden unless His Majesty the King of Denmark shall have previously refused to join the alliance of the North, etc." With the unctuous hypocrisy so common in our Georgian diplomacy the King of Sweden was made to stipulate that the annexation of Norway should " take place with every possible regard and consideration for the happiness and possible liberty of the people of Norway."¹

Alison rides lightly over this last article by speaking of it as severely condemned by French writers,² calmly ignoring the fact that it was quite as severely condemned by some of the chief statesmen of England. Even Canning admitted to having read the treaty at first with " shame, regret and indignation."³ How, he asked, could we at a peace treaty speak of restoring the ancient States of Europe, if pledged to the dismemberment of one of the most ancient ? Lord Grey called the treaty one

¹ Parl. Deb., XXVI., 365, 6. ² IX., 358. ³ *ib.*, XXVI., 775.

“of robbery and spoliation.” The Government, said Lord Holland, had shocked and disgusted every man in the kingdom, “and that without securing one visible advantage to their country.”¹ Lord Buckingham thought it “the most disgraceful treaty that had ever stained the annals of any country.” Ponsonby on the same day, June 18th, moved an Address for the disengagement of the country from a treaty of “unprincipled robbery,” for which his minority reached 113; and yet Alison, purporting to write history, so deliberately miswrites it, as to represent the only condemnation of it as coming from France. Even loyalty to a Tory War Government should have certain limitations.

Of course, as we had been at war with Denmark since our seizure of her fleet in 1807, all the so-called laws of war justified us in an attack on Norway; but to partition Denmark and give part of it to Sweden, not then at war with Denmark; to tell her that, unless she gave it up voluntarily, it should be taken by force, was to go as far in disregard of the law of nations as ever Napoleon or Alexander had gone. What made it worse was, that Denmark had initiated peace negotiations with us before the 3rd of March, on which date the treaty of partition was signed. In substance indeed it had been concluded earlier. But Denmark, after closing her ports against French privateers and giving every facility to our commerce, had followed up these friendly actions by direct peace proposals on February 25th, the answer to which reached Stockholm on March 4th, the day after the Swedish treaty was signed. Lord Castlereagh considered her proposals “intolerably insulting,” including as they did the restitution of her fleet and compensation for its seizure; he found it “difficult to listen to them with temper,”² forgetting that his colleague, Lord Sidmouth, now at the Home Office, had strenuously supported those very proposals as the only course consonant with

¹ *ib.*, XXVI., 733.

² *Parl. Deb.*, XXVI., 772, 3.

justice. But, to justify the Swedish treaty, it was necessary to put the worst construction possible on the conduct of Denmark. Castlereagh steadily refused to let Parliament see the correspondence with Denmark, declaring that she asked for the return of her conquered colonies "without our receiving an equivalent," as if her consent to join the Allies was no equivalent for the restoration of her fleet and her colonies. She had a right to ask her price, nor was the price an unfair one.

As Lord Castlereagh's policy thus threw Denmark into the arms of France, it can only be said of it that it was, if possible, worse than its morality. But a further step was taken for the coercion of Denmark's neutrality. At the end of May, 1813, Sweden, England and Russia opened fresh negotiations with Denmark; if Denmark would supply the Allies with 25,000 men, Sweden would accept of the diocese of Drontheim and its adjoining territory instead of Norway, and England would restore all Danish colonies except Heligoland.¹ But as Sweden had as little right to claim Drontheim as to claim Norway, and England offered no compensation for the fleet, nothing came of the negotiation, and Denmark remained loyal to the French alliance. For which she had to pay, of course, when the Allies triumphed in 1814. Denmark was compelled to join the Coalition, and, in return for the Duchy of Pomerania and the island of Rugen, to surrender Norway to Sweden; an uncomfortable union between the two countries which lasted till 1905, when Norway successfully released herself from the bondage to which the Allies had subjected her.

AUSTRIA JOINS THE ALLIES

It is almost impossible to unravel the skeins of Metternich's diplomacy during the months before Austria joined the Coalition on August 11th, 1813. Diplomacy and duplicity never came nearer to being synonymous

¹ Ann. Reg., II., 418.

terms. Napoleon relied too much on the reluctance of his Imperial father-in-law to enter the lists against him ; his marriage having been partly founded on the idea of basing a political alliance upon a matrimonial one, although, if European history has shown one thing more clearly than another, it is the inefficacy of royal intermarriages to safeguard international peace. By prodigious efforts Napoleon had re-created an army of some 300,000 men, as enthusiastic as ever for the illusions of war ; and, with a fine scorn for popular superstition, he left Paris for the front on April 13th.¹ But many thought that a new campaign might still have been averted by some conciliatory concessions on his part. Prince Schwartzenberg expressed himself in this sense to Mollien, the French Treasurer, about Austria, whose desire for war might have been assuaged by the restoration of her Illyrian provinces.² But Napoleon argued that his foes were insatiable ; that if he ceded a town, they would demand kingdoms, and that the only way to force them to peace was by ceding nothing and by inspiring them with the fear of his military superiority.³ Nevertheless, when the defection of Prussia was known at Paris, he sent Count Narbonne to Vienna with the offer of Silesia, of which Austria had been robbed by Frederick the Great, for a promise of 100,000 men.⁴

But by that time the wind in Austria was blowing in a strongly pro-Prussian direction. Still the treaty of 1812 bound Austria to her guarantee of the integrity of the French dominions. Did she intend to adhere to it, Narbonne asked on April 21st, receiving for answer from Metternich that the stipulations of the treaty were inapplicable to present circumstances : a clear indication of the coming defection.

It was best to wait on military events, and on May 2nd there was a most significant military event. The battle

¹ Mollien, III., 228.

² Mollien, III., 288-91.

³ *ib.*, III., 181.

⁴ Ernouf, 516, 7.

of *Lutzen*, though indecisive, was a proof that the new French army was not to be despised. The French accordingly crossed the Elbe on May 6th and 7th, and the next day Napoleon entered Dresden, which the Russians had occupied on March 4th, after the French retirement the day before.

Metternich had tried to draw the old King of Saxony into the scheme for a partition of the Duchy of Warsaw, but after *Lutzen* that sagacious monarch thought it wiser to return to the capital he had deserted at the end of February and to the allegiance he had thought of deserting. He was welcomed with great honour.

The Duc de Bassano wrote to Napoleon on May 8th, after the news of *Lutzen*, urging him to peace : the French, he said, were grown tired of the necessity of always winning battles ; peace was their only wish, and peace the pressing need of France ; and, whatever sacrifices were necessary, peace would be glorious.¹ And Napoleon, true to his principle of a quick victory followed by a prompt peace, listened gladly to proposals of a Peace Congress brought from Vienna by Count Bubna. He wished all the Belligerent Powers to be represented, even the insurgents of Spain (as he regarded them) ; he wrote specially to the Austrian Emperor about the Congress,² and had it officially recommended in the *Moniteur* of May 24th: if England, by refusing to attend, should prevent the settlement of a world-peace, at least a peace for the Continent might be arranged at Prague.³ But the concessions asked of him were no trifles : Austria was to recover her Illyrian provinces, and increase her territory on the side of Bavaria and the Duchy of Warsaw : the Rhine Confederation was to be abolished, and the Prussian monarchy restored. Napoleon proposed as the basis of an armistice that the Allies should retire behind the Oder, and himself behind the Elbe, and a Congress be arranged to meet at Prague. This was on May 18th, the day before

¹ Ernouf, 533, 4.

² Correspondence, 20019.

³ Ernouf, 539.

he left Dresden for Silesia, and with this proposal Bubna returned to Vienna. The moment for attaching Austria to his side by some concessions had passed.

But Napoleon, as fertile in diplomatic as he was in military resources, made another bid for peace, sending a proposal through Caulaincourt to Alexander : to extend the Rhine Confederation to the Oder, and to compensate Prussia for the territory thus lost by the cession to her of the whole of the Grand Duchy, with Warsaw for her capital, thus putting her in her position before Jena by the addition of four or five millions of people, and placing such a barrier between France and Russia as might calm Russian fears of French aggression.¹ Considering that after Lutzen the Allies were so discomfited that even an optimist like Sir Robert Wilson thought that there was nothing left for them but to retire behind the Oder,² this was a good offer, though of doubtful satisfaction to Saxon and Polish feelings ; but the Czar would only receive Caulaincourt in the presence of the Ministers of England, Austria, Prussia and Sweden, who successfully guarded his wavering soul from the wicked enticements of his ancient tempter.

Then for a few days fighting interrupted negotiation. By the great battles of Bautzen on May 20th, and of Wurzen on May 21st, with their appalling toll of life on both sides, the Allies were forced to retire ; after which the belligerents resumed their peace talk. Such a trial of arms induced the Allies to reply favourably to the French offer of an armistice : it was to last for six weeks, from June 4th to July 28th ; but which side may be accused the more justly of trying to " amuse " the other ? The six weeks might enable the Allies to redouble their forces, perhaps also to attach Austria to their fortunes ; whilst Napoleon could strengthen his position in Dresden and fortify the whole line of the Elbe. But the armistice ruined his chances of victory.

¹ Alison, IX., 229, 30.

² Diary, I., 250.

The argument of Thiers¹ that Napoleon signed the armistice in order to gain two months for preparation is based on a very strange paraphrase of a letter from Napoleon to the Duc de Bassano, of June 3rd, as exposed by Ernouf.² The real letter ran as follows :

“ We are at disagreement over the armistice. The Russians want to settle themselves at Breslau, whilst I want Breslau to remain neutral. I should wish the armistice to last till the 20th of July, they would wish it to terminate on the 5th ; the difference is reduced to that. Will they sign ? It is a problem. Communicate this negotiation to M. de Bubna (the Austrian ambassador). Inform him of the uncertainty and of the difference between us : that after my consent to evacuate Breslau for the love of peace, the Russians wish to occupy it ; that . . . it is doubtful whether we grant it ; that in any case it is desirable for you and M. de Bubna to go to Dresden, because if hostilities had to begin again, I should change my line of operations. I desire you then to depart this evening ; you will march all night with an escort which Gen. Marchand will give you, and you will continue so escorted to Dresden. That’s your place ; there it is you will treat with M. de Bubna : there it is you will be useful to me as centre of correspondence. If the armistice is concluded, I will go myself to Dresden.”³

Thiers gave the same letter from Napoleon to the Duc de Bassano as follows : “ Do not explain yourself with M. de Bubna, bring him with you to Dresden, and put off the moment when we shall be obliged to accept or refuse the Austrian propositions. I am about to conclude the armistice, and then the time I have need of will be gained. If, however, they persist in requiring for the settlement of this armistice conditions which do not suit me, I will furnish you with topics for prolonging the discussions with M. de Bubna and for securing me

¹ XVI., 5, 7, 8,

² 542, 3.

³ Correspondence, 20073.

the few days I should need for driving the Allies from the territory of Austria."¹

Napoleon's real feelings about peace at this critical time may best be gathered from the letter he wrote on June 18th to the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès: "The Minister of Police (Savary) seems to desire to incline me to peace. This can have no result, and it wounds me, because it gives rise to the supposition that I am not peacefully inclined. I desire peace, but not a peace which would force me to take up arms again within three months, and would dishonour me. . . . Make him aware of the impropriety of his behaviour. I am no blusterer, I do not make a trade of war, and no one is more pacific than I am. But my decision on this subject will be ruled solely by my sense of what a solemn matter this peace is, by my desire that it may last, and by the general situation of my Empire." On June 30th he complains again of the pacific talk in Paris; "a somewhat warlike tone should be assumed. People in Paris are very much mistaken if they think peace depends upon me. The enemy's pretensions are excessive."

The confidence of the Allies in their ultimate superiority, despite their recent reverses in the field, is revealed in the preamble to the Anglo-Russian treaty of Reichenbach on June 15th: "At a period when Providence has manifestly favoured their arms, their Majesties," etc.² The Czar promised 160,000 men for an English subsidy, payable monthly, of £1,333,334, and for half a million for the maintenance of the Russian fleet. An Anglo-Prussian treaty, signed at Reichenbach on June 14th, pledged England to pay Prussia £666,666 for 80,000 men, exclusive of those in the garrisons. But secret treaties also pledged England to help to restore Prussia to its ancient dimensions before 1806, in return for additions to Hanover in Lower Saxony and Westphalia.

But, large as the Allied forces were, unless Austria

¹ XV. 600, 1.

² Ann., Reg. II., 354.

joined the Allies, the chances of war must favour France. Which wooer therefore would win that fickle Power, with its army of 100,000, was the question of the hour. Austrian mediation was offered on June 11th, a few days before the subsidiary treaties at Reichenbach proved how little the contracting Powers desired or expected a pacific result from the armistice. Before Metternich had his famous interview with Napoleon at Dresden on June 28th, he had at Reichenbach pledged Austria to join the Coalition, if before the end of the armistice France had not accepted the Austrian terms: which were, the division of the Duchy of Warsaw between Austria, Russia and Prussia, the restoration of Illyria to Austria, the independence of the Hanseatic towns, the dissolution of the Rhine Confederation, the restoration of Hanover to England, and the restriction of the French frontiers to the Rhine and the Alps.¹ Napoleon charged Metternich at their interview with cloaking enmity under the mask of mediation; with wishing to dismember France under the pretence of moderation; with asking him to capitulate to enemies he had conquered.² But the concluding words of Napoleon's speech: "How much has England given you to make war on me?" Metternich always maintained were fictitious.³

From the conflicting evidence of the interview between Napoleon and Metternich it seems to emerge that Napoleon exhibited considerable temper: a fault often laid to his charge, though Alexander's words to Czartoryski in December, 1809, need to be remembered, that "all his fits of passion were only meant to intimidate, and were often the fruit of calculation."⁴ A Convention in any case was agreed to on June 30th, which released Austria from her alliance with France; her mediation was accepted, and a Congress at Prague was fixed to open on July 5th, subsequently altered to July 12th, and to

¹ Ernouf, 554, 5.

² Alison, IX., 363-7.

³ Ernouf, 563.

⁴ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 200.

terminate on July 20th. At Metternich's instance, not Napoleon's, the armistice was extended to August 10th; Metternich's object in this extension being to gain more time for the bringing to the front Hungarian and other forces from the more distant parts of Austria¹; he was playing Napoleon as an angler plays a salmon.

On July 12th at Trachenberg the Allies laid down their plan of campaign, including the military movements of Austria, the mediating Power, if mediation failed. Nor was it meant not to fail. The Allies' peace terms went to the total undoing of most of what French arms and policy had effected since the wars in Europe had begun; Austria aspired to the recovery of her old Italian rule; Russia wished to embrace Poland again; Prussia had an annexing eye on Saxony; it was aggrandisement all round, cloaked under the pretence of moderation and zeal for the independence of Europe. Napoleon's offers of lower terms were shattered against demands for a total surrender, which, if yielded, would, as he said, have cost him his head. A secret article at Reichenbach promised Austria £500,000 of English money and the same in necessaries of war, if she would join in the war, and on July 27th Francis II, affixed his signature to this article; but in return she was to bring 200,000 men into the field, and to receive back the territory she had lost. It was a tempting bribe for a country always pressed for money, and Napoleon's great mistake lay in his not attaching his father-in-law to his side by the same golden links that bound Francis to his enemies. Victory was the prize of the highest bidder.

The Congress at Prague, by reason of delays for which each side blamed the other, did not meet till July 28th, and long before that time news had come from Spain which greatly hardened the Allies in their demands and decided Austria to throw in her weight on what seemed

¹ Alison, IX., 389.

² Alison, IX., 390.

the winning side. Napoleon heard of Wellington's decisive victory at Vittoria on the evening, not the morning (as Alison says) of June 30th¹; the Allies on July 3rd; there was no longer fear of any fresh French forces from Spain. The enormous quantity of artillery and ammunition and treasure captured from the French gave a distinctive feature to this battle, the French only saving one howitzer on their entry into Pampeluna.² King Joseph himself barely escaped capture, but the leading fact was that his army of 70,000 no longer occupied Spain. Napoleon wished his brother Joseph made aware that he blamed him for everything that happened in Spain for the last five years; Joseph had shown neither military talent nor skill in government. Naturally the event had sent everybody in England "wild with joy," as Francis Jackson wrote to his brother George. It brought the Peninsular war virtually to an end in what Lord Castlereagh called "a blaze of glory"; nor did many reflect that it restored to power the most reactionary and tyrannical clergy in Europe, "who had hitherto been the chief, and latterly the sole supporters of the war."³ If there was an institution in Europe more detestable than another, it was the Inquisition in Spain; yet when the Cortes abolished it and ordered the decree for its abolition to be read in the churches, the clergy refused to obey and a quarrel ensued between the Regency and the Papal Nuncio, who had encouraged resistance to a measure tardily aimed at religious persecution.⁴ It was for the benefit of such a clergy that we liberated Spain.

But the Spanish victory destroyed all chance of a compromised peace in Europe. It stiffened Metternich in his determination on war; so that when General Nugent remarked to him that he feared Caulaincourt's arrival for the Prague Conference meant peace, Metternich told him that it would make no difference, as his proposals

¹ Ernouf, 567.

³ Alison, IX., 748.

² Ann. Reg., II., 174.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 153-5.

were such as would not be accepted, and, if they were accepted, they would be raised.¹

It is remarkable (and Castlereagh quoted it as a proof of the British Government's desire for peace) that even after Vittoria they intimated to Russia in August their readiness to accept Austrian mediation. They had refused to accept it when offered by Austria in April, but the difference was that in April Austria offered simple mediation as an ally of France, whereas in August she offered it as an armed mediator. This meant that Austria, insufficiently prepared for war in April, had become so by August. But Castlereagh had another reason for his changed attitude in August, namely, that in the interval France had "relaxed her pretensions with respect to Spain, leaving that as a question for discussion instead of asserting an indisputable claim."² That should have removed a great stumbling-block to peace, had there been any real will to it on the part of the Government: a fact studiously ignored by the conventional historians of the time.

Before starting to Prague to join Narbonne at the Congress, Caulaincourt, fearful of the German defection, which soon came about, urged Napoleon, instead of hoping for an agreement with Russia, to come to one with Austria. The Duc de Bassano's evidence is that Napoleon would have made great sacrifices to please Russia, and that he wished sincerely, not only for a peace for France, but for one that should be lasting for Europe.³

But promptitude was necessary, and the renewal of war was due to the loss of a few hours. For on July 31st Bassano received a despatch from Prague to the effect that Metternich declared Austria to be still disengaged to either side till August 10th, when the armistice would end, and would not promise her neutrality after that date. Metternich's statement in his Memoirs, that he had used

¹ Rose, *Napoleon*, II., 326.

³ Ernouf, 579-83.

² Parl. Deb., XXVII., 142, November 17th, 1813.

this threat of war to Napoleon at Dresden and later at Prague, conflicts with Bassano's evidence of the later date, which allowed a much shorter time for a pacific settlement.¹ On August 5th, Napoleon, yielding to his Minister's advice, approached Metternich through Caulaincourt. Metternich's answer was delayed to August 8th, when he laid down Austria's terms with perfect clearness. They were the extreme terms of the second article of the Allies' secret treaty of Reichenbach; and an answer to this ultimatum was required by August 10th. Caulaincourt urged their prompt acceptance by Napoleon, for otherwise on August 11th Austria would join the Allies. Had Napoleon's answer been sent on August 9th, instead of on the evening of August 10th, it was Metternich's real or feigned opinion that his offer of a partial surrender and partition of the Duchy of Warsaw, with some compensation to Saxony, also of a restoration of a large part of the Illyrian provinces, and of the making of Dantzic a free port, would have led to a peace. But by the time the answer arrived Austria had joined the Allies. Peace was thus only missed by a few hours.

Austria declared war on August 12th, justifying it, as usual, on disbelief in the sincerity of the French desire for peace, and on the nobility of her own aims.² But the French reply of August 18th was more convincing: did it indicate Austria's desire for peace to dictate the acceptance of her terms in a shorter time than would be needed for the capitulation of a besieged town? Was it reasonable to expect to adjust the interests of six large and other Powers within sixteen days? Even Alison admits that the French had the better of this argument. The long Austrian manifesto drawn up by Gentz, Metternich's Secretary, put the Austrian case with great ability and was doubtless very plausible to the average Austrian reader.³ It insisted on the unwillingness of Napoleon "to make to the repose of the world even one

¹ *ib.*, 462, 3.

² Alison, IX., 414.

³ Ann. Reg., II., 422-33.

single nominal sacrifice:”¹ which was certainly not true before the armistice ended. It also told the world that in April Napoleon had suggested to Austria the annexation of Prussia as a punishment for her defection and the protraction of the war.

But negotiations must have survived for some days the termination of the armistice, for it appears that on Metternich’s insistence on August 11th on Trieste being included in the cession of Illyria, Napoleon on the 12th yielded all that was in dispute, agreed to the concessions required, and authorised Caulaincourt to sign a peace on such terms; that Metternich submitted these proposals to the Austrian Emperor on August 14th; that on the 15th an answer was deferred till the arrival of the Czar; and that the Czar, arriving on the 16th, immediately rejected the proposals, and urged Francis to risk a war.²

In that case the responsibility for the renewal of the strife rests more with Alexander than with Napoleon. It often takes many years for history to overtake and correct the false impressions of contemporary actors. That Napoleon did his best at this time to secure peace for the world, and that he was defeated by Metternich and Alexander, seems to be confirmed by the fact that Metternich’s greatest regret in his later life was that he had not made peace with Napoleon in 1813.³

By the time the armistice ended abortively the accession of Austria had brought up the Allied numbers to some 600,000 men against Napoleon’s 350,000.⁴ A concentric attack on Dresden promised a speedy victory, but for the last time Napoleon’s star befriended him, and a two day’s battle sent the Allied forces flying, and made prisoners of 14,000 Austrians (August 27th and 28th). The defeats of the French Marshals, however, deprived this victory of its fruits, of which the chief one hoped for had been the capture of Berlin; and they spoiled the plan of campaign. The defeats of Oudinot at Gross

¹ *ib.*, II., 428. ² Ernouf, 597. ³ Ernouf, 601. ⁴ Mollien, III., 315.

Beeren (August 23rd); of Macdonald at the Katzbach in Silesia (August 26-29th); of Vandamme at Kulm in Saxony (August 29th); and of Ney at Dennewitz (September 6th), not only involved the French in immense losses, but were followed through September by ineffective operations of which the balance of advantage was strongly against them. But despite these successes Sir Robert Wilson's evidence is that on September 1st the Allies would still have been glad to close with any fresh overtures from Napoleon.¹

At the end of September Napoleon wrote to his father-in-law with a view to peace negotiations, and Sir Robert, pressing on Lord Aberdeen "the necessity of meeting the amicable proposal with an amicable spirit," thought that peace was not far off.² George Jackson, writing on September 30th, notices the general enthusiasm at the news of the Austrian Emperor's unfavourable answer for renewed negotiations.³ But there was also a more pacific current running; for when fresh overtures came from Napoleon on October 5th, Jackson testifies to "a strong wish to accept Bonaparte's terms and to open a negotiation." Even though news of the fall of St. Sebastien had come from Spain, the general desire was for peace and for giving Napoleon a chance of coming to terms that were not too mortifying.⁴

Meantime after some indecision Napoleon reverted, against the advice of his marshals, to an attack on Berlin, but on October 8th an event occurred which made it impossible for him still further to resist their counsel that the wiser course would be a retreat to the Rhine. That was the defection of Bavaria to the Allies. The defection was far from being whole-hearted, but the French alliance had not been all gain. Bavaria, in her Proclamation of defection lamented the loss in the Russian campaign of her whole army, reinforced in October by

¹ Diary, II., 109.

² *ib.*, II., 149, 50.

³ Diaries, III., 290.

⁴ *ib.*, II., 293, 306.

8,000 men.¹ The defection was "joyous news," of course, to the Allies, and Sir Robert Wilson thought it decisive of the independence of Europe.² It was the restriction of their commerce by the Continental system that alienated the Germans from France; otherwise Sir Robert thought that Napoleon "might have ruled over very willing subjects in Germany."³ But in the previous May Napoleon had spoken of peace with Russia as an easy matter, inasmuch as he had given up all idea of keeping up the Continental System.⁴ Yet it does not seem that this was ever made clear in the peace discussions.

The failure to negotiate brought matters to an issue in the battles round Leipzig (October 16-19th). The French losses were put as high as 60,000; but Sir Robert Wilson, to whom Schwartzemberg chiefly attributed the Allied successes on the 16th,⁵ declared that, so far from 10,000 representing the Allied loss the Austrian casualties were as high as 30,000, the Russian and Prussian 10,000.⁶ But before the fight was over Napoleon on October 17th tried to effect an armistice through the Austrian General Marfeldt, taken prisoner: he would evacuate Germany and retire behind the Rhine; he would give up Hanover and the Hanse towns if England would give up the captured colonies, though he feared England would never make peace, except for such a limitation of the French navy as he could never agree to; he asked nothing "but to repose in the shadow of peace, and to dream of the happiness of France as he had dreamt of her glory."⁷ Such an appeal to a man like Francis II., described at a ball in Frankfurt in November as "sneaking about, as he always does, as if he were ashamed of himself,"⁸ was of course useless; but on October 20th Sir Robert Wilson, ardent as he was in and for the war, said that he had no hesitation in giving his vote for peace on the terms offered

¹ Ann. Reg., II., 439. ² Diary, II., 157. ³ *ib.*, II., 187.

⁴ Jackson's Diaries, II., 95, 6. ⁵ Diary, II., 235. ⁶ *ib.*, II., 196.

⁷ Fain, 1813, 416. Wilson's Diary, II., 172. ⁸ Jackson, II., 353.

by Napoleon.¹ But, as usual, the pro-war party prevailed, though as yet there was no idea of invading France nor of restoring Louis XVIII.

The carnage round Leipzig will always remain among the chief examples of the devilry of war. George Jackson, visiting the field of battle on October 21st, tells how it made his blood run cold "to glance only, as we passed along, on the upturned faces of the dead, . . . yet there was a strange fascination in it that attracted rather than repelled."² Habit soon came to his aid against his humanity; but as for the lives destroyed and tortured after October 17th, it was not on Napoleon alone that responsibility rests. The battle of Leipzig carried the world another milestone in that progressive worsening of war which has now reached such lengths that even the strongest militarists are appalled by the spectre they have evoked. The first trial on land of Congreve's rocket so frightened the French as to cause a solid square of their infantry to surrender in a few minutes to Captain Bogue's rocket-brigade; and in 1814 it was successfully used at the battle of the Adour. The shell which has immortalised the name of Henry Shrapnel was, according to Alison, first used in the bombardment of St. Sebastien; but on June 16th, 1809, Wellington wrote to Shrapnel from Abrantes that his shell had contributed greatly to the victory at Vimiera on August 21st, 1808; and its admirable but dreadful effects were attested at Torres Vedras. In the ranks of the benefactors or the enemies of their kind Congreve and Shrapnel fill a foremost place. The victims of their inventions must have run into millions.

Robert Fulton, the American engineer, whilst entitled to the blessings of mankind as the inventor of the steamship, has deserved less well of his kind as the designer of the submarine torpedo, which in its later developments threatens to revolutionise naval warfare. Lord Stanhope on May 14th, 1813, expressed great apprehension from

¹ Diary, II., 179.

² II., 313, 4.

the use of Fulton's device in the American war. Napoleon, when Fulton explained it to him, expressed disapproval and refused to adopt such a mode of warfare; but Pitt and Lord Melville promised him £40,000 for the first French ship destroyed by it, and, though it failed at Boulogne, "he got £10,000 for his experiments, and put £15,000 in his pocket, and then went to America."¹ Lord Grey, when at the Admiralty, only consented to the contract because convinced of its inutility; he had given Fulton every facility to try his "submarine invention" under Sir Samuel Hood, but owing to one night being too dark and another too rough, it had never succeeded; yet he confessed that he had so great a dislike to such a mode of warfare "that he had passed many uneasy nights at the idea of the plan being practicable."² In the annals of the world's statesmen is there any other modern instance of the smallest desire to restrict the miseries of war by exercising any check on its destructive development? When the poisonous gas, called Kakodyl, was advocated in 1844 for use in war, Prof. Scoffern wrote: "We should hail with satisfaction any discovery that could make war more terrible, conscientiously believing that the application of such wholesale weapons of slaughter would be the surest means of establishing universal peace."³ And when Lord Dundonald invented a gas which he thought could destroy any fleet or fortress in the world, Lord Panmure, Minister of War, wrote on July 20th, 1855, to Gen. Simpson to suggest a trial of it on the Malakoff, and on August 7th, 1855, Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Panmure to advocate its being tried in the Crimea.² Not that way lies the hope of universal peace, if the world's history counts for anything.

After Leipzig there was nothing for the French but a disastrous retreat and a re-crossing of the Rhine in the early days of November. On the 5th Alexander with

¹ Parl. Deb., XXVI., 190.

² *ib.*, XXVI., 194.

³ Mechanics' Magazine for August 18th, 1844.

great pomp entered Frankfurt, which Napoleon had left on the 1st, and the presence of other Allied monarchs, ministers and ambassadors gave to that ancient city an air of gaiety which a brief repose and the success of the campaign rendered very agreeable to the jaded warriors.

Their stay in Frankfurt was also enlivened by news of the simultaneous successes of Wellington in Spain. Soult had taken the chief command on July 13th (again that unlucky number); King Joseph had persuaded his brother to recall Soult early in the year, nor without reason. For Soult, who always professed great friendship for Joseph, in order to shield himself from the latter's charges of disobediences to his orders, sent to Napoleon charges of treason against Joseph, which by the chance of a wrecked vessel fell into Joseph's hands and revealed the treachery of the Marshal.³ But by July the best chance for French interests in Spain was to send Soult, who came within an ace of winning the battles in the Pyrenees and of relieving Pampeluna from the British blockade, which compelled its capitulation on October 31st. The town of St. Sebastien had been taken by storm on August 31st, after great feats of bravery, and its fortress had surrendered on September 18th. The storming had been of peculiar horror. Sir George Bowles wrote about it to Lord Malmesbury: "After gaining possession of the town, and driving the garrison into the castle, the usual horrors commenced, and every species of enormity was committed, and Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were imitated and surpassed, and Herod completely out-Heroded." When he entered the burning city next day, he was struck by "the horrible number of dead, dying and wounded wretches of every age, sex and nation beyond description."¹ And this he described as the most civilised town in the Peninsula. Nine-tenths of it were burnt, and such was the ensuing bitterness against Wellington, who in

¹ Panmure Papers, I., 349.

² Du Casse, 57, 8.

³ Malmesbury's Letters, 383.

vain had tried to save it and its citizens, that he advised the Cabinet to be prepared for a possible war with the country he was liberating ! But the fall of the garrison effected the liberation, and the French invasion of Spain now passed into a British-Spanish invasion of France.

Whilst the Allies were at Frankfurt the peace negotiations, begun at Leipzig, were resumed. The Allies were not indisposed to peace—on their own terms. In answer to propositions from Napoleon through Count Mervelot, they sent the Count St. Aignan, French ambassador at Weimar, whom they had taken prisoner on their advance, with their proposals. He reached Paris on November 15th. Only a general peace as distinct from a Continental one, would be admitted—which meant that England must be included. France must be restricted to her “natural” frontiers, within the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees ; all claims of sovereignty over Germany must cease ; Spain must be independent under her own ancient dynasty ; Holland must be independent, and Piedmont ; though about these last two there might be negotiation. For a peace on these bases England would make the greatest sacrifices and recognise such liberty of trade and navigation as France had a right to claim. But there was to be no suspension of military operations. They suggested the neutralisation of a town on the right bank of the Rhine for a Congress.¹

The Duc de Bassano sent Napoleon’s answer to Metternich on November 16th. He asked that Mannheim should be the place of meeting, and added that “a peace based on the independence of all nations, both from the Continental and from the maritime point of view, had been the constant object of the desires and of the policy of the emperor.”¹

Vague as these words were, they were not more so than those of the Allies about the English sacrifices ;

¹ Fain, 1814, 55.

but they could hardly have meant less than the acceptance of the principle of the independence of Germany, Spain Holland and Italy. Metternich, however, unnecessarily, as Wilson thought, pressed for a clearer acceptance of the proposed basis, and ten days were lost over this dispute.¹

Alison lays all the blame of this delay on Napoleon's wish to gain time for defensive preparations,² but the later researches of Baron Ernouf have dispelled this view, which indeed conflicts with the understanding that negotiations were not to interrupt military operations.³ The Duc de Bassano urged the immediate acceptance of the Allied proposals, extreme as they were; but at the end of November a political intrigue at Paris raised so fierce a storm against that Minister on the false charge of thwarting Napoleon's wish for peace that his life was threatened, and Napoleon was forced to bend to the storm by making Caulaincourt Foreign Minister in his place.⁴

On December 2nd Caulaincourt replied to Metternich's letter of November 25th, which complained of the vagueness of the previous answer, by interpreting the words as meaning "the recognition of the absolute independence of all nations, so that none could claim over any other suzerainty or supremacy under any form, on land or sea." Though involving great sacrifices on the part of France, these would not be regretted if England made similar sacrifices for a general peace.⁵ This explanation, which seemed clear enough, Metternich, whose wish for an end of the war was prompted by his jealousy of Russia, accepted with great satisfaction.

But the despatch arrived too late; for on December 1st the Allies had determined to continue the war, as expressed in a manifesto of Metternich's composition on December 7th. Metternich declared that it was the most difficult piece of work he had ever undertaken.⁶

¹ Diary, II., 236.

² IX., 956.

³ 607

⁴ Ernouf, 610.

⁵ Fain, 1814, 62.

⁶ Fournier, Congress von Chatillon, 25.

Alison thought it the most wonderful model of moderation the world had ever seen, though to Sir Charles Stewart it seemed far too tame and in many respects highly objectionable.¹

It began with that common formula of an invading enemy, that their hostility was not to the people of France, but to the preponderance of France as extended by Napoleon beyond her proper limits. The first use they made of victory was to offer peace to France, which they wished to be happy, "because a great people could only be tranquil in proportion as it was happy"; but they wished themselves also to be happy, nor would they lay down their arms till a just balance of power secured a real peace to Europe.² The manifesto had exactly the effect which Metternich desired. Its moderation appealed strongly to the French peace party, and the result was shown in the pacifist attitude of the Legislative Body, whose committee in their report on the documents relating to the peace negotiations expressed itself so vehemently against the miseries of the conscription and of the war that Napoleon took the risk of dissolving it rather than act upon principles he thought fatal to France. From this time to the end his attitude, as expressed in his own words on January 4th, 1814, was: "If fortune betrays me, my course is clear; I make no point of the throne. I will humiliate neither the nation nor myself by subscribing to shameful conditions."³

The note of moderation in the British pronouncement was as conspicuous as in Metternich's manifesto. "No disposition," ran the Prince Regent's speech to the Lords on the opening of Parliament on November 4th, "to require from France sacrifices of any description inconsistent with her honour or just pretensions as a nation will ever be on my part, or in that of His Majesty's Allies, an obstacle to peace." And Canning's remark deserves

¹ Diaries, II., 381.

² Ann. Reg., 1813, II., 442.

³ Correspondence, XXVII., 10, No. 21062.

to be recalled: "We must not expect from our enemy that to which we should not ourselves submit, that he should sacrifice to us his own honour and interest, to him equally dear" as our own were to us. What was the explanation of this changed note? Partly that jealousy of Russia which was to mark the rest of the century, Austria especially manifesting her indisposition to exchange the preponderance of France for that of Russia; partly, one may suspect, a wish to make things easy for Louis XVIII. as successor to Napoleon, though as yet no such a wish was openly avowed. In any case counsels of moderation beat in vain against the Czar's determination to carry the war across the Rhine into French territory and to the bitter end.

The Frankfurt terms, or rather demands, were of course justified by the military situation of the Allies, but to call them moderate was absurd. They became less moderate just before crossing the Rhine: it was no longer a demand for "the natural frontier" of France, but for the frontiers of 1792, which meant the loss of the Rhine provinces, Luxemburg, Antwerp and Belgium. Napoleon told Caulaincourt that he disbelieved in the sincerity of the Allies' wish for peace, and declared his resolution to sign no conditions so humiliating to himself and to France.¹ He would agree to the "natural limits" conditions, but not to the more restricted ones. France, he said, by Bernardière, without the Rhine departments, without Belgium, without Ostend, without Antwerp, would be nothing; a peace on such a basis could only be possible by the restoration of the Bourbons; for neither empire nor republic could subscribe to such a peace. He would give up Venice, Magdeburg, Hamburg, but the natural limits of France without restriction or diminution was the *sine qua non* of any peace he would make. That was his attitude on January 19th, 1814.²

¹ Correspondence, XXVII., 10, No. 21602. January 4th, 1814.

² Fain, 1814, 75-80.

History would have been different, possibly better, had peace been made at Frankfurt by timely concessions. Everything was going badly for the French Empire. The reaction to monarchy showed itself in the bloodless revolution in Holland in November, 1813, which brought back the Prince of Orange, no longer as a Statdholder of a Republic, but as a Sovereign promising constitutional liberties. In the same month Bernadotte occupied Hanover ; ultimately to be made happy as a Kingdom, no longer as a mere Electorate, under the Duke of Cambridge. But monarchy stood for the restoration of all the old barbarities, as shown by the fact that torture in criminal cases, abolished by the French, was revived by the new Government of Hanover. There were two cases of torture in 1817 in the town of Hanover, and three cases in 1818 in other parts. A poor wretch, who had stolen a cow, was tortured to make him confess in March, 1818 ; nor was it till December of that year that the practice was abolished.¹ The Elector of Hesse had not taken the place of Jerome Bonaparte for many weeks before all the reforms of the last seven years were swept away ; the Code Napoléon abolished ; the feudal privileges of the nobles restored together with the feudal servitudes of the poor. This was the real meaning of the monarchical victory. The Austrians, when they crossed the Alps, called on the Italians to join in delivering Europe from a tyranny that had been less galling than that which came back with the invading Hapsburgs. The Danes, forced to their knees, were obliged to submit to Bernadotte's occupation of Holstein as a pledge for the cession of Norway to Sweden.

The Swiss people (the Helvetic Confederacy) with little or no complaint to make of their relations with France, desired nothing better than to keep out of the war by the privilege of neutrality. On November 20th they proclaimed their neutrality at Zurich in a special Diet,

¹ T. Hodgskin's Travels in North Germany, II., 51.

and took military measures to safeguard their frontiers. But the Allies, purposing to use Switzerland as one of their doors into France, were not to be deterred by so trivial an obstacle as the neutrality of a smaller Power. It is to the credit of Alexander, always the difficult member of the League, that on an appeal by the Diet at Zurich for protection he in December carried his opposition to the violation of Swiss neutrality so far as to say that he would regard such violation as a declaration of war against Russia.¹ But military necessity ended by prevailing over morality, though the survival of some moral scruples is proved by the long sophistical proclamation issued by Prince Schwartzenberg on December 21st, to the effect that Swiss neutrality was not a true nor legitimate neutrality and that therefore no regard would be paid to it.² The next day Switzerland was invaded in great force ; but at least one voice in England raised an impotent protest against the flagrant wrong, Sir James Mackintosh declaring in Parliament, that, if mere military advantage were to supersede Switzerland's right to her neutrality ; if she were not to be counted as neutral simply because she happened to cover a large frontier of France ; there was an end of all public security and of the rights of all nations.³ But the invasion was easily effected ; the well-disposed Swiss showing ample joy, and the pro-French Swiss hardly daring to speak, as Metternich wrote on December 23rd, 1813. There was only one spirit in Switzerland, he wrote on January 14th, 1814, and that was anti-French.⁴ The French Empire was virtually doomed.

¹ Fournier, 38, 9. Castlereagh Correspondence, IX., 103.

² Schoell, Recueil, II., 8-17. ³ Parl. Deb., XXVII., 314.

⁴ Fournier, 247, 250.

CHAPTER XIII

1814. Diplomacy and War

TIME and experience had mellowed the war ardour of Sir Robert Wilson, who on November 14th, 1807, in his anti-Napoleonic wrath, would have hanged "the first pusillanimous knave that whispered peace."¹ He had taken a gloomy view of the Allies' prospects in 1813, not foreseeing the many defections that were to falsify his pessimism, and he thought the decision to invade France "for the dethronement of Bonaparte unwise, unjust and indecent."²

He had come also to be more charitable towards Napoleon, whose splendid system of education in Italy fully compensated, he thought, for the heavy contributions exacted from that kingdom. "Contributions and conscriptions might vex the present race, but knowledge was in progress and liberty kept company. With all his faults and crimes and misrule Bonaparte did more for the advantage of mankind than can ever be effected by the repeal of his acts and the abolition of his establishments. The settlement of the Kingdom of Italy alone entitles him to the highest consideration as the regenerator of a people."³

A most remarkable admission, coming from such an enemy as Wilson; and small reason indeed was there for Italian gratitude to the Allies for undoing Napoleon's work for the unification of Italy, and handing her back to the rule of the Hapsburgs and Bourbons.

¹ Life, II., 385.

² Diary, II., 326. February 20th, 1814.

³ *ib.*, II., 363.

But Wilson had ceased to have his former influence with Alexander, who at one time could not part from him without abundant kissings. Wilson had so come round to pacifist views that in September, 1813, the chief of Blücher's staff, Gneisenau, insisted on a change, and Lord Burghersh was sent to supplant Wilson at Schwarzenberg's headquarters. Alexander had become resolute on the invasion of France, whatever Wilson might think, or whatever Francis II. might apprehend.

But after the crossing of the Rhine at the end of 1813 by the vast hordes leagued against France, it was for many weeks doubtful whether Wilson's belief in the unwisdom of the invasion would not be justified by results. For Napoleon was no less successful in dividing the councils of his enemies than in dividing their armies, and a breach between Austria and Russia was only very narrowly averted. But Wilson had not reckoned with the defections that were possible. The worst of these was the defection of Murat, King of Naples, in January, 1814; an event of first-rate military consequence. That Napoleon's brother-in-law, the comrade of so many campaigns and victories, should succumb to the blandishments of Austria, to act in military concert with her in return for a doubtful guarantee of the maintenance of the kingdom of Naples in his family, was an episode which had still power to shock the blunted moral sense of Europe. His rule in Naples had been of a reforming and beneficent character;¹ and, had Napoleon consented to proclaim the independence of Italy by adding to Murat's kingdom all the States south of the Po, history might have taken a different course. Murat entreated Napoleon to explain himself; otherwise he would be forced to join the Allies. He prayed him to make peace, and to make it on any terms. This was on December 25th, 1813, but on January 11th, 1814, he made his peace with the Allies, and on January 19th entered Rome with 20,000 men. Murat's

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIX., 54.

defection, wrote George Jackson to his mother, was "a most base and inglorious act," but Wilson found some extenuation for it in Napoleon's having signed a decree uniting Naples with the Kingdom of Italy.² Europe had not said its last word to Murat, who after the return from Elba reverted to his old allegiance, and for his pains was shot by the Allies like a dog on October 13th, 1815—a sad end, at the early age of forty-four, of a man whose fine figure and finer costume, whose black whiskers and blue eyes had so long been among the most conspicuous splendours of the Imperial armies.

The Allies did not cross the Rhine without a singular exhibition by the Czar of his superiority to military vindictiveness. He had shown this also after 1812, when on Napoleon's crossing the Niemen into Russia the Polish Diet met at Warsaw and proclaimed the restoration of ancient Poland, and when, after Poles had joined in the plunder of Moscow, he had written to Prince Czartoryski on January 13th, 1813, "Vengeance is a sentiment unknown to me, and my greatest pleasure is to return good for evil." He had accordingly ordered his generals to treat the Poles as friends and brothers.³

The same spirit was more conspicuously shown in the proclamation to his troops before the crossing of the Rhine. The proclamation is remarkable as the only modern instance of the imprint of Christianity on that most inveterate of the world's bad customs which in two thousand years it has done so little to ameliorate and nothing to eradicate: "When our enemies," part of it ran, "invaded our empire, they did us much evil, but they received for it a terrible punishment; the Divine wrath struck them. We have no wish to act as they did; inhumanity cannot be pleasing to the Supreme Being. We forget the barbarous acts of our enemies. We stretch out our hand, not to avenge ourselves, but as a sign of

¹ Diaries, II., 394.

² Diary, II., 347.

³ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 232.

reconciliation and friendship. The glory of Russians consists in conquering their enemies, and in doing good to the conquered and to persons unarmed (*aux hommes pacifiques*). This last practice is taught us by the religion which all hearts revere, which preaches to us by the mouth of God Himself, 'Love your enemies and do good to your adversaries.' Soldiers! I am convinced that as I lead you with mildness in the enemy's country, your generosity as much as your arms will ensure you victory, and that by your bravery against those in arms, as also by your Christian affection for those who are defenceless, you will soon reach the end of your difficult expedition and acquire the reputation of a brave and virtuous people." The date of this remarkable document is January 6th, 1814, from Friburg. Alison's translation¹ is so free as to differ in several respects from the original as given in Schoell's *Recueil*.²

Davilensky was Alexander's aide-de-camp, but his narrative supports the belief that his master enforced the spirit of his proclamation during the campaign. He prevented the pillage of Soissons after it was taken by storm on February 2nd; he gave directions for sparing the city of Troyes.³ Doubtless he did his best; but that the invasion was a saintly crusade is the shallowest of fictions, and it was especially the Russians who were charged with cruelties whose only excuse was the glutting of their revenge. Napoleon testified to these atrocities with obvious conviction from the very beginning of the campaign. On February 2nd he speaks of them as seen by his own eyes (*ce tableau que je viens de voir par mes yeux*). Conscious of their value as war propaganda, he strove to turn them to military use, writing to Joseph on February 21st, "The enemy have committed nameless horrors at Montereau, at Bray, and at Nogent; that ought to be known at Paris."⁴ To the same on February

¹ IX., 1006.² II., 28.³ 77, 128.⁴ Correspondance, XXVII., 213, No. 21327.

24th : " The enemy has committed so many horrors that all France will be indignant at them. Here on the spot the most moderate only speak of them with fury."¹ To Savary on February 21st, he gave an appalling report of what was done, declaring that the crimes described made his hair stand on end.² He urged him, as Minister of Police, to see that letters descriptive of these things, " whole letters with the name of the writer and of his addressee," should be published broadcast over France. And Napoleon's evidence is corroborated by that of Sir Robert Wilson, who stated his belief that " pillage, burning, and all sorts of military atrocities had never been exceeded."³ And that something of Blücher's spirit tainted the clemency of Alexander himself is shown by his answer to Marshall Marmont's request for a suspension of the combat at the final battle for Paris, that unless Paris surrendered before evening " you will not know where your capital stood."⁴ Yet, when Paris fell and the fierce passions of his countrymen wished to burn the city in revenge for Moscow, it was to Alexander's influence and entreaties that the escape of the capital was ascribed.⁵

The campaign that followed the crossing of the Rhine and ended with the fall of Paris at the close of March is among the most instructive in military history for students of the military art. But to posterity only the results, not the details, are of interest. For more than a year negotiations for peace had played a sort of accompaniment to military operations, and the negotiations at Frankfurt were resumed with hardly a break at Chatillon on February 4th, where Caulaincourt (the Duc de Vicence), the French Foreign Minister, had to contend alone as ambassador against the three English Ministers, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart, aided by Lord Castlereagh, and against the respective Ministers

¹ *ib.*, 239, No. 21360. ² *ib.*, No. 21329. ³ *Diary*, II., 337.

⁴ Davilensky, 363. ⁵ *Ann. Reg.*, 1814, 21.

of Austria, Russia, and Prussia ; namely, Stadion, Rasamoufski and Humboldt.

These few weeks at Chatillon present perhaps the most curious picture of diplomatic human nature ever presented to the world. The proceedings have come before us in the minutest detail as described in letters that first emerged from manuscript form in Fournier's account of the Congress¹ ; containing the letters of Count Stadion to Metternich ; of Metternich to Hudelist, and to Stadion ; of Count Munster to the Prince Regent of England ; also the Diary of Count Hardenberg, and above all Floret's Journal of the Congress.

" Our life here is a kind of hell," wrote Stadion, " dining as we do every day with persons who have a right to detest us."² Poor Caulaincourt cut a sorry figure in such company ; one against six, for nothing was further from the truth than that the six, standing for Europe, were only one person ; but, if Caulaincourt looked unhappy, Aberdeen's dejection was so much worse that Stadion joked about his imminent funeral, so scandalised was the diplomatic innocence of his lordship by all he saw.³ On February 27th Lord Aberdeen declined as a man of honour to sign a lie that his guests at dinner wished him to sign.⁴ In the company of the highest representatives of European diplomacy he found himself in a sort of thieves' kitchen ; nor could Stadion conceal his contempt for the " good " Lord Aberdeen, who showed pity for Caulaincourt, pity for France, some even for Napoleon, and accused his colleagues of being tyrants.⁵ Stadion found much amusement in the daily quarrels that arose between the English ministers over details after the conferences : " It is sometimes Stewart, sometimes Lord Cathcart that takes the side of unreason, but then they get heated in a very comical manner, and Lord Aberdeen, with his letting things go and his disgust

¹ Der Kongress von Chatillon, 1900. ² Fournier, 315.

³ *ib.*, 318, February 10th.

⁴ *ib.*, 385.

⁵ *ib.*, 323.

for all our policy, plays his part very well.”¹ Sport occasionally lightened their labours, as on February 17th, when Caulaincourt took Aberdeen and the Russian diplomat in pursuit of game, and their failure to see a creature to kill partook of the general ineffectiveness of their proceedings.

The extent to which this famous Congress was dominated by English control is shown by the fact that the first protocol of February 5th laid down as a preliminary basis the acceptance of the British demand that there should be no discussion of the Maritime Code, and that as Great Britain demanded no maritime concessions from other nations so she would agree to none except as settled by special treaties.² It was a political axiom that the doctrine of Free Ships Free Goods, as contended for by Napoleon, and ultimately accepted by us in 1856, would ruin the Empire. Yet Lord Aberdeen, our ambassador to Austria at the Frankfurt Conferences, though instructed not to raise any discussion of the Maritime Code, deliberately encouraged the idea that England would suffer some canvassing of her maritime claims, and thereby greatly displeased both the Government and his two colleagues.³ The concession of the principle that the neutral flag protected the cargo (bar contraband) would have gone far to stop the war, and without more detriment to the Empire than accrued to it after 1856.

Seldom was there less union of hearts than amongst these diplomatic celebrities who towards the end of January, 1814, claimed to represent united Europe. Schwartzemberg, the commander-in-chief, Francis Joseph, and his ministers Metternich and Stadion; Frederick William III. of Prussia, and his ministers Hardenberg and Gen. Knesbeck; even Castlereagh, all desired an immediate peace without further invasion of France; but Alexander of Russia would hear of nothing but an advance on Paris and the dethronement of Napoleon. With his

¹ *ib.*, 349. ² Fain, 1814, 251. ³ Jackson's Diaries, II., 360, 387.

eye always on the recovery of the Duchy of Warsaw as part of Poland, he hoped, by substituting Bernadotte for Napoleon at Paris, to have a grateful supporter for his policy of aggrandisement in the East instead of a rival; and it was to thwart a policy so dangerous for Austria that Metternich wished for as speedy a peace as possible. When it came to Alexander's threatening at the end of January to proceed with his troops alone to Paris, Metternich was driven to threaten Austria's secession from the Coalition, unless the Czar would consent to the opening of peace negotiations at Chatillon.¹

When they did open on February 4th, it was after Napoleon's defeat at La Rotherie on February 1st had compelled his retreat to Troyes. On February 5th, Napoleon, fearful for the safety of Paris, so far yielded to the advice of the Duc de Bassano, after a long struggle, as to send Caulaincourt *carte blanche* instructions to effect any settlement that would save Paris and avert a final battle. Even Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine, Italy, Piedmont, Genoa, might be yielded.² For the Allies' terms had risen with their rising fortunes. Even in November, 1813, the successful insurrection in Holland had caused them to brush aside their original terms, which would have left France her "natural frontiers" of the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees; now they wanted the pre-Revolution frontier of 1792, which implied the loss of the Rhine Provinces, of Alsace-Lorraine, of Belgium and Antwerp. In a protocol of February 7th it was represented that for these concessions by France there would be large colonial concessions by England, as the sacrifice which her good nature prompted her to make to the interests of her allies, who so far from intending any sacrifices themselves looked to enormous territorial gains.

Metternich in a letter of February 21st said of Napoleon's instructions at this time that they expressed

¹ Fournier, 66.

² Ernouf, 623.

his willingness to "accept all the conditions which had been proposed to him provided an end could be made."¹ Caulaincourt has been blamed for not at once consenting to sign a peace; but his enemies clearly intimated their intention to continue the war, and his request for a clearer definition of the terms of the protocol and for information as to whose benefit France was to make her concessions served as a pretext for postponing his answer till further instructions came from Napoleon.

Nor was Caulaincourt's hesitation surprising, urgent though he was with Napoleon to yield to the logic of necessity, both for the sake of France and for that of his dynasty. For the protocol involved the surrender of everything that had been won in twenty years, and when the terms reached Napoleon at Nogent on February 8th, his reception of them can easily be imagined. The terms, so far from being moderate, as they professed to be, were to the last degree humiliating, amounting in fact to an unconditional surrender; and, though he would surrender all the conquests won by himself since the Consulship, to surrender the conquests made by the Republic before that time he regarded as a breach of his Constitutional oath to preserve intact the integrity of the State.² What answer then was he to send to Caulaincourt? A very stormy interview of seven hours between himself and the Duc de Bassano and Berthier (the Prince de Neuchâtel), ended at last in his consenting to accept the Allies' terms. He was to sign a despatch to that effect next morning, the 9th, at seven. But by 5 a.m. information having reached him which promised an easy victory over Blücher, he was no longer willing to send the despatch, preferring to risk another throw with fortune, and being disposed, like all men of the militarist type of mind, to take his wishes and hopes for solid certainties.

On February 9th Caulaincourt in a private letter to Metternich expressed his readiness to accept the Allied

¹ Fournier, 258.

² Fain, 1814, 110.

terms on condition of an immediate armistice, and his wish to leave the decision to the Austrian Emperor. But as there was nothing which the Czar and his spokesman, Rasamoufski, wished for less than peace, on February 9th the Czar demanded a suspension of the conferences, which accordingly were suspended till February 17th, with no other result than needless delay and a vain remonstrance from Caulaincourt.

Metternich's whole aim was to effect a peace and to effect it with Napoleon, in order to thwart those designs of Alexander against Poland, and incidentally against Austria, which he foresaw as the probable result of an alliance between Alexander and a Bourbon French king ; and he was indignant with the Czar for having successfully averted a peace that had been so nearly won. " But for the pranks of the Emperor Alexander," he wrote, " we should have signed the peace on the 11th or the 12th."¹ " If he had not prevented us, at the best of all possible moments, after the battle of Brienne (La Rotherie) from making peace within twenty-four hours, all would now be at an end, and we should be on our way home."²

" We have paid dearly for not having concluded peace at the moment when Napoleon begged for peace under our most exorbitant conditions as a mercy."³ Clearly the marplot of peace at this earlier date was Alexander, but Metternich was responsible for demanding of Caulaincourt terms of impossible acceptance.

But at the moment no terms seemed impossible to extort. The French army was in so bad a state that on February 8th Napoleon wrote of it as dying of hunger : " twelve men have died of hunger. The Cavalry and the Guard are dying of hunger."⁴ Yet with his 70,000 men Napoleon still hoped to defeat in detail Blücher's Silesian army of 45,000, and then Schwartzemberg's of 120,000 men. The first feat he so far achieved by his signal victories

¹ Fournier, 259. ² *ib.*, 261., February 25th. ³ *ib.*, 263, March 12th.

⁴ Correspondance de Napoleon, XXVII., 135.

over the Russians at Champaubert on February 10th, and at Montmirail on February 11th, that he wrote to his brother Joseph of the Silesian army as no longer existing.¹ The victory at Vauchamps on February 14th added to his confidence of ultimate success.

These successes nearly brought united Europe to an open schism. On February 14th Hardenberg wrote to Frederick William that the Austrians talked of nothing less than of making a separate peace with France "rather than let themselves be dragged to Paris at the trail of the Emperor of Russia, without knowing what he will do there, and subscribe blindly to his ideas as the sole manager of Europe." The exasperation caused by the sort of dictatorship claimed by Russia he described as extreme.² So on the same day wrote Count Munster to the Prince Regent; Prince Metternich declared hotly that "Austria, unable to submit to such a dictatorship on the part of Russia, would be obliged to act according to her own interests," and even spoke of a separate peace.³ And the King of Prussia, whom for his invariable pessimism Hardenberg called Cassandra, was a great drag on his brother of Russia. Castlereagh needed all his diplomatic skill during these critical weeks to keep Austria and Russia from an open breach.

It came at last to a determination on the part of England, Austria, and Prussia to use pressure upon Alexander for an immediate peace. Castlereagh visited him, but with no result; for the Czar on February 10th had been fortified in his opposition to peace by a despatch from his ambassador in London declaring the Prince Regent's strongest disapproval of Metternich's policy, or of any peace with Napoleon. In vain Castlereagh contended that the Prince Regent's private opinion could not weigh against his Government's instructions.⁴ Only renewed threats by Metternich of isolating Russia brought the Czar back into line with his allies, and to his consent to a renewal of the Chatillon conferences.

¹ *ib.*, XXVII., 150. ² Fournier, 289. ³ *ib.*, 299. ⁴ Fournier, 128, 9.

These were renewed on February 17th, the day on which Napoleon won a victory at Nangis. He had become more sanguine than ever ; writing to Caulaincourt the same day that he had cut off Schwartzenberg's army and hoped to destroy it before it re-crossed the Rhine ; that he had destroyed several armies with hardly a blow ; that in a military career of twenty years he had never been in a position of greater advantage. Therefore, though he wished for peace and Caulaincourt must do all he could to obtain it, such peace must be one based on the proposals made at Frankfurt, not on more humiliating conditions ; nor was Caulaincourt to sign anything without his order. The *carte blanche* instructions of February 5th were no longer applicable.¹

On the evening of the same day he gladly seized the opportunity of a proposal for an armistice from Schwartzenberg to write directly to his Imperial father-in-law a letter expressive of his strong desire for peace, but also of his hope that his more favourable military position would entitle him to more favourable terms than those that had been proposed at Chatillon.²

Hitherto those terms had been vague and general ; but on the 17th a protocol of the Allies defined them in more specific detail. A preliminary draft treaty laid down the sacrifices France was to make and the compensations she was to receive from England for the same. Practically it undid the history of twenty years, and was couched in the dictatorial tone of an ultimatum, though a discussion at a later date was granted. Napoleon was to renounce all acquisitions made by France since 1792, and all political influence outside those boundaries ; to recognise the reconstruction of Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Holland and Spain in the sense desired by the Allies ; to surrender all fortresses in Germany and Italy, especially Mayence, Hamburg, Antwerp, Bergen-

¹ Correspond. de Napoleon, XXVII., 185.

² Fain, 1814, 129.

op-Zoom, Mantua, Venice and places on the Oder and Elbe ; and as a deposit, till the ratification of peace, the French fortresses of Huninguen, Besançon and Belfort. In return she was to receive back from England all her conquered colonies with a few exceptions.¹

Caulaincourt betrayed much agitation on hearing these terms read, and with difficulty controlled himself at the demand for the surrender of the fortresses. Lord Aberdeen, says Floret, strongly condemned this demand as too offensive ; and Floret shared his opinion : " for to suppose that Napoleon could subscribe to a proposal so humiliating to himself and to France, he would need to be at the last extremity." ² This was of course the view that Napoleon took.

When he received these terms, he wrote to Caulaincourt on February 19th, that there was not a Frenchman whose blood they would not cause to boil with indignation ; that he would a hundred times prefer the loss of Paris to the dishonour and extinction of France ; that he was so moved by the infamous terms as to feel himself dishonoured by their mere proposal ; that he would prefer the return of the Bourbons with reasonable conditions to the infamous proposals sent to him.³ In the same sense he wrote to the Emperor Francis on February 21st, exhorting him to peace, declaring that he would never yield Antwerp and Belgium, and that there was not a Frenchman who would not prefer death to the acceptance of the " frightful conditions proposed at the Congress." He continued to insist on the Frankfurt conditions as affording the only possible peace.⁴

It is a great reflection on Metternich's policy at this juncture that he wrecked all chance of the peace he still desired with Napoleon by insisting on terms that made it impossible. His quarrel with Alexander still subsisted ;

¹ Fain, 1814, 277-83.

² Fournier, 381.

³ Correspondance, XXVII., 205, No. 21315.

⁴ *ib.*, XXVII., 224-6, No. 21344.

for on February 28th Count Munster wrote to the Prince Regent that the jealousy between the Austrians and Russians was becoming alarming.¹ And this within a few weeks of the taking of Paris!

On the same day, February 28th, the Allies declared that, whilst prepared to consider any modification of their project that did not affect its substance, they would consider an answer delayed beyond March 10th as a refusal that must close all further parley. It was during this interval that Lord Castlereagh and the Czar succeeded in stiffening their allies against any weakening in their dealings with France; and on March 9th by their treaty at Chaumont the Allies resolved to abide by the Chatillon conditions; each of the four promising 150,000 men to their common object, and for twenty years, if necessary. But Great Britain was of course to pay, not only for her own contingent, but to pay an annual subsidy of five millions between the three Continental despotisms. Her generosity reached the sublime, which so often touches the ridiculous; for although the annual cost of a Continental conscript was only £10 15s. (that being the price she paid per man for the German legion of 10,000 men to serve the Czar by the treaty of Peterswaldau on July 6th, 1813) she was now graciously allowed, if preferring to furnish her contingent in foreign troops, to do so at the rate of £20 for every foot soldier and £30 for every horseman.²

The sands were running out. Caulaincourt, who had displeased Napoleon by his reiterated pleas for peace and his warnings about the Bourbons, wrote him a vigorous letter of remonstrance on March 5th: if he ceaselessly repeated the word peace, it was because he thought it indispensable and urgent, in order not to lose everything. Sacrifices must be made, and made in time. If a counter-project was not submitted, all was over. Neither the power of France, nor the glory of the Emperor depended on retaining Antwerp nor other point on the newer French frontier.³

¹ Fournier, 303. ² Parl. Deb., XXVII., 623. ³ Fain, 289-94.

At the Conference of March 10th, Caulaincourt read a paper to the Allies, which, while justly critical of the balance of power, the ostensible object of the dismemberment of the French empire, and of the value of the colonial concessions made by England, was irrelevant to the actual dispute. Clearly whatever colonies were given back by us could weigh but little against the proposed restitutions by France, seeing that our naval superiority in 1812 was 240 ships of the line and 200 frigates against 104 French ships of the line and 50 frigates.¹ And on January 3rd, 1814, Napoleon, in a letter to the Duc Decrès, his Minister of Marine, summed up all his naval force in all his harbours as no more than 37 armed vessels.² In any future war therefore all the colonies restored to France would for many years have been immediately recoverable; so that our generosity in this respect was of less account than was apparent on the surface.

Meantime the potentates at Chaumont, in spite of their recent treaty, were still far from being a happy family. On March 13th Metternich wrote to Count Stadion: "You have no idea of what they make us suffer here at Headquarters. I can do no more, and the Emperor Francis is already sick. They are crazy and fit for a lunatic asylum."³ But it was these crazy men who claimed to settle the destinies of Europe, nor so long as such men govern the world, will any peace in Europe be enduring.

On March 15th Caulaincourt, in a state of great agitation, according to two witnesses, and with trembling lips, according to Humboldt, amid a deep and ominous silence, read to the Conference the counter-project sent by the Duc de Bassano. With regard to Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Holland, the French proposals agreed almost verbally with the proposals of the Allies, thus removing one great cause of war. But adherence

¹ Alison, IX., 89, 90. ² Correspondance, XXVII., 7, No. 21059.

³ Fournier, 345.

to the Frankfurt terms was involved in the renunciation of all French possessions (except Elba) beyond the Alps and beyond the Rhine. This meant that Prussia was to be disappointed of the Rhine provinces; that England was still to see Belgium and Antwerp under French control; that Austria was to be satisfied with the recovery of her Illyrian provinces and with the limitation of her Italian possessions to the line of the Adige.¹

These and the other proposals of the 27 articles admitted of course of discussion and alteration, either by omission or addition, and the French Minister begged for their consideration in a conciliatory spirit; but they provoked the Allies to a high state of indignation, the English trio being for their immediate rejection, but giving way to Count Stadion, who thought it more decent to defer an answer till further instructions were received next day from their respective Courts. Caulaincourt showed not unnatural vexation at a reception of his proposals that seemed to indicate a predetermined intention to listen to no offers of compromise.

The counter-project having thus failed, on March 17th the Duc de Bassano intimated in a letter Napoleon's readiness to throw Antwerp also into the sacrifices of France, provided England gave up *all* the conquered colonies, not excluding even Mauritius.² And at his instance Napoleon himself also wrote to Caulaincourt, authorising him to include Belgium and Antwerp among the concessions he was prepared to make for peace, subject to the immediate evacuation of France by her invaders.³ Thus even at the eleventh hour a peace seemed possible, had only those despatches arrived in time.

But probably no counter-project would at that time have satisfied the Allies, in whose favour fortune's wheel had so decisively turned by the capitulation of Soissons on March 6th. On the 18th they made a declaration coolly saying that the counter-project they had invited

¹ Fain, 1814, 315-323. ² Fain, 1814, 327, 8. ³ Ernouf, 632, 3.

was inadmissible, inasmuch as it was opposed to the principles they deemed necessary for the world's social reconstruction, and that the negotiations were terminated by the action of the French Government. They made the common disclaimer of all views of ambition or conquest, and eulogised the unselfish sacrifice by England of her colonies to France.

At the closing Conference of March 19th, Caulaincourt made a vigorous reply, which traversed their arguments with intellectual, if not with political success.¹ So the decision was transferred to the sword. For Caulaincourt did not receive Napoleon's second *carte blanche* instructions to add Antwerp and Belgium to the other concessions till the morning of March 21st, mysterious delays having hindered the messenger, when the Congress had broken up and Caulaincourt was some distance from Chatillon. It is possible that, had these despatches from Bassano and Napoleon, sent off on the morning of March 17th, arrived in normal time instead of on March 21st, the decision of the Allies on March 23rd to march on Paris might have been averted and peace made with the conquered Emperor on the terms of every concession short of the abdication of his dynasty. On chances so slight hang the destinies of the world.

So little power has the British Parliament or nation over transactions which more nearly touch their interests than any other that we find Whitbread and Lord Grey complaining a year after these negotiations at Chatillon had failed that the terms of the treaty there proposed were "altogether unknown."² As late as April 6th, 1815, Lord Castlereagh steadily refused to lay the papers on the table of the House.³

The result is well known which made the April of that year one of the most thrilling in the history of Europe. The battle for Paris on March 30th, with the inevitable capitulation, and the entry of the victorious monarchs

¹ Fain, 337-46. ² Parl. Deb., XXX., 573. ³ *ib.*, XXX., 351, 2, 441.

on the last day of March, afforded a striking illustration of the mutability of human affairs. In the capital of a country that had been the first to proclaim the rights of the peoples as higher than those of monarchs, here was the whole population of Paris "so drunk with joy," as George Jackson put it, that in the passage of their conquerors along the boulevards French men and French women pressed to kiss the sabres, and even the very boots, of their Majesties of Russia and Prussia. They longed to throw themselves at the feet of the master whose predecessor their own fathers had executed more than twenty years before.

The dethronement of Napoleon by the Senate on April 2nd; the defection of Marshal Marmont with his 12,000 men from Napoleon to the Allies on April 5th; the finally successful efforts to obtain Napoleon's unconditional abdication, followed by the treaty of Fontainebleau on April 11th, which after no ungenerous provision for himself and his family consigned him to the island of Elba; still more the measures taken for the restoration of Louis XVIII. were events that naturally caused unbounded delight in England. All at once was joy and jollity, in the happiest April of our history, and for three successive nights, April 11th, 12th and 13th, London illuminated itself with special brilliance. It was on one of these nights, the 12th, that Napoleon at Fontainebleau sought to release himself from a life which his fall from power and the desertion of so many of his faithless Marshals had deprived of value. It is to the honour of Alexander that in the discussion on the fallen Emperor's future, when Metternich and Castlereagh were opposed to Elba for his residence as too near to France, he is reported to have said: "Napoleon is unfortunate to-day; I become his friend again, and all is forgotten," and insisted on Elba with the title of Emperor.¹ But someone was responsible for the ambuscade which on the night of April 18th, attempted

¹ Sorel, *L'Europe*, VIII., 332-4.

the Emperor's life.¹ On April 20th, when Louis XVIII. came from Hartwell to the metropolis on his way to Dover and France, the reception he met with testified to the strange but ardent wish of this country for the restoration of a line of monarchs that had waged as many as four wars with us in the first eighty years of the eighteenth century. The Prince Regent, driving to Stanmore to greet him, had his postillions dressed in white jackets with white hats and cockades, and received the king at the door of the Abercorn Arms. The beauty of the day contributed to the splendour of the welcome to London; it was said that "wherever the eye ranged, it fell on attitudes and countenances of loveliness and joy," and when Grillon's Hotel in Albemarle Street was reached, the Prince conducted the monarch into a room where golden embroideries of *fleurs de lis* on hangings of crimson velvet gave what solace they could to the fatigue of the ponderous monarch.

With these great contrasts of fortune passed the month of April, and the joy of England was complete that summer when the Monarchs of Russia and Prussia and Metternich deigned to visit our land of freedom.

THE TREATY OF PARIS: MAY 30TH, 1814.

Our definitive treaty of peace with France was signed at Paris on May 30th, 1814.² Unlike all the treaties of peace made in the eighteenth century, which were assailed with every strong epithet evolved by the British language in the course of ages, this peace gave general, if not universal satisfaction, owing perhaps less to its abstract perfections than to the lassitude caused by the war. A tacit convention clothed it with those attributes of honour and solidity that had been denied to all its predecessors.

The ancient frontiers of 1792 were given back to France, with the addition of Avignon and its district, some portions of the Netherlands, and the German fortress

¹ *ib.*, VIII., 335.

² Parl. Deb., XXVIII., 174-197.

of Landau. But the notable feature of the peace was the adoption of the principle so well laid down by Lord Grenville, that the security and permanence of the peace would be proportioned to our adoption of the principle of restoration instead of that of partition.¹ We gave up, therefore all the colonies we had won in twenty years, except Tobago and St. Lucia in the West Indies, Mauritius and its dependencies, a portion of St. Domingo, and of course Malta. We also restored the right of fishing off Newfoundland and the islands off the St. Lawrence : a right that had been so fiercely disputed in so many wars. The agreement that Antwerp should become a commercial port removed one of the great sores that had kept alive our hostility to Napoleon.

These were the main points of the peace as they affected this country, and at any other time it would have been denounced as a most lame and impotent conclusion. Lord Liverpool's defence of such extensive concessions was remarkable for its novelty. To preserve our authority in Europe, he said, it behoved us not to proceed on a principle of colonial monopoly, which would rather diminish than increase our power ; nor would it be to our interest to shut France out completely from her colonial and commercial advantages ; " it was exactly in proportion as she was colonial and commercial that we had a power over her by attacking her colonies and wounding her commerce."² Thus lightly he threw to the winds the great principle of both the Pitts that the ruin of French commerce should be our first object in war, and told the French that the more colonies they had the larger was the target they offered us to attack : a truth that very much diminished the grace of concession. Lord Castlereagh put the matter on higher ground : that the more we encouraged France to be a commercial and pacific nation the less formidable she would be as a

¹ *ib.*, XXVIII., 368.

² *ib.*, XXVIII., 371, June 28th, 1814.

military and conquering power.¹ But why not, by thinking of that before, have saved ourselves and the world many years of bloodshed? Since it was commerce and colonies that Napoleon wanted for France after Austerlitz, why had we been fighting for five years to prevent her from having them? And what sacrifices did Austria or Prussia or Russia make to the common peace? Nothing at all. On the contrary they made vast accessions to their dominions; and the subjection of millions to their crowns they called the liberation of Europe.

THE FATE OF NORWAY

As the treaty of Chaumont professed the zeal of the Allied Powers for the protection of "the rights and liberties of all nations," the scant regard paid by them to those of small nations cast an enduring stain on the diplomacy of the statesmen in whose hands the chance of war had placed the resettlement of Europe. If Portugal or Holland had no cause for complaint, it was far otherwise in the case of Genoa, of Denmark and Norway, and of Saxony.

Lord Grey said that in the cases of Saxony and Genoa "all the maxims of right on which the security of nations rested had been more grossly violated than in any transactions of modern times,"² but the treatment of Norway was even worse. The treaty at Kiel (January 14th, 1814) between England and Denmark, and a treaty of the same day between Sweden and Denmark, subjected the beaten Power to the will of the stronger. Denmark was compelled to cede Norway to Sweden, under promise of England's using her good offices with the other Allies to procure her a fair indemnity for the same. All Denmark's captured colonies, except Heligoland, were to be restored to her, and she was to be paid at the rate of £400,000 a year for the services of 10,000 men in the army of the Crown Prince of Sweden (Bernadotte).³

¹ *ib.*, XXVIII., 462.

² Parl. Deb., XXX., 702, April 20th, 1815.

³ Parl. Deb., XXX., 218.

But what of the wishes of Norway? These were shown in a most unmistakable form. Norway immediately asserted her independence; the Crown Prince of Denmark, Christian Frederick, taking the oath to the country as Prince Regent of Norway. When the Danish flag was taken down at Christiania, a funeral dirge was played, and the Norwegian colours hoisted. In April Prince Christian was proclaimed king, but when a Norwegian envoy was sent to London to appeal for England's support of a people rightly struggling to be free, Lord Liverpool advised him to return whence he came, and all the practical answer the Norwegians got was a declaration of the blockade of their ports to starve them into subjection to the liberating Powers. Fine but futile speeches were made in the Lords by Grey and Grenville,¹ and in the Commons by Whitbread and Ponsonby,² against the iniquity of forcing Norway to a choice between starvation and subjugation by a country that had always been her "unrelenting, unforgiving and unremitting enemy," and, although Lord Castlereagh had admitted that our treaty with Sweden for the annexation of Norway had carried with it no guarantee of its peaceable possession, a majority of 81 in the Lords and of 158 in the Commons decided that the navy of Great Britain was rightly used in suppressing the independence of a nation that had as much right to it as either Spain or Portugal. It was contended that we were bound by the Swedish treaty; but, assuming that much contested point, what could be thought of Castlereagh's diplomacy which had involved us in a treaty that resulted in so ridiculous a commentary on our professed zeal for the independence of all nationalities? So strong was the general indignation that Sir Robert Wilson not only thanked God for the speeches of Lords Grey and Grenville, but added that, had he but £100 in the world, he would gladly give fifty of them to aid their efforts.³ But

¹ Parl. Deb., XXVII., 768-808. ² *ib.*, XXVII., 834-64. ³ Diary, II., 378.

eloquence and argument were wasted on the Liverpool Government. It came to war at last. Bernadotte had to march against Norway to break her opposition to the Allied will. It ended after a couple of weeks of war with the capitulation of Friederickstein on August 13th, followed by a convention of complete submission, and in October things were so arranged that a majority of 74 to 5 in the Norwegian Diet carried the annexation, and Charles XIII. of Sweden was elected as King of Norway on November 4th : in its origin and in its results as bad a piece of history as was ever played by diplomacy.

THE FATE OF GENOA

The transfer of Genoa to the Kingdom of Sardinia was another instance of the disregard shown by the Congress and by Lord Castlereagh for the wishes of the people concerned. The instructions to Lord William Bentinck on December 28th, 1813, by Lord Bathurst had been perfectly clear : he was, if possible, to take possession of Genoa in the name of, and for, the King of Sardinia, *provided* it was with "the entire concurrence of the inhabitants." These instructions had not, however, reached Lord William before February 2nd, 1814, by which time he had become committed to obey commands of the Austrian general, in accordance with which, after landing at Leghorn, he proceeded to attack the French garrison of Genoa, which surrendered after two days. Not, however, before, on landing, he had issued a proclamation offering England's assistance to Italians who should rise against Napoleon. This had been followed in Genoa itself by a proclamation on April 26th, in answer to two addresses by the Genoese praying for the restoration of their ancient Government, and for the re-establishment of the old constitution as it was before 1797, subject to a temporary provisional Government to last till January 1st, 1815. He issued the proclamation because "the Genoese universally desired the restoration of their ancient

Republic ; they dreaded above all other arrangements their annexation to Piedmont, to the inhabitants of which there always had existed a particular aversion.”¹ As the Genoese envoy Pareto told Lord Castlereagh, the fruit of two centuries of quarrels had established between Genoa and Piedmont “an invincible antipathy,” and the mere rumour of the annexation had turned a day of festival into one of mourning.

It may be, as Lord Castlereagh said, that Lord William had mistaken or exceeded his instructions, or that Genoa, as a conquered State, had no claims on our regard, or that the military security of Italy as a whole demanded the sacrifice of Genoa to the wider interests of the Peninsula, but it still remained that Sir William had promised on behalf of this country to restore the ancient republic, and that a promise so given demanded its observance. Although the House of Commons decided otherwise on April 27th, 1815, by 171 to 60, posterity, which weighs opinions and not majorities, cannot ignore the fact that in the minority which set the nation’s word and the cause of human freedom above the will of the monarchs at Vienna, were men such as Lord Grey, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Grenville, Sir James Mackintosh, Ponsonby, and Whitbread. “The great object of the sovereigns of Europe,” said Lord Castlereagh, on March 20th, 1815, “was the re-establishment and the re-organisation of those two great monarchies which, to all practical purposes had been destroyed during the war—Austria and Prussia ;” their need of flanks for their security necessitated the creation of a barrier between Austria and France,² and for this reason Genoa must be annexed to Sardinia, as she duly was at the end of 1814, despite her own wishes and regardless of Lord William’s promise.

THE FATE OF SAXONY

As Genoa was sacrificed to the necessary provision of a security for the flank of Austria, so was Saxony to that

¹ Parl. Deb., XXX., 391.

² Parl. Deb., XXX., 289.

of a similar security for the flank of Prussia. As Castlereagh put it, "the object was to give Prussia additional force, and increased population was that force."¹ Castlereagh in 1814, when he helped to consign an unwilling population to Prussian domination, little dreamt of 1914.

Though he held that the right of conquest fully justified the incorporation of the whole of Saxony with Prussia, he had been among the opponents of more than a partial annexation.² Thus it came to pass that the British Government, in its support of "legitimacy," treated a legitimate sovereign of ancient family, than whom none had for so long a term of years governed his subjects more wisely, on avowedly penal principles. But it was as vain for Lord Wellesley to raise such a protest³ as it was for King Frederick Augustus himself on November 4th, 1814.⁴ By the final settlement at Vienna on June 9th, 1815, Castlereagh's policy of increasing Prussian force by additional population was entirely successful; for more than half of Saxony went to Prussia's share of the spoil: 7,720 square miles out of 13,510; 864,404 out of 2,047,148 of her inhabitants. Prussia thus not only regained all that she had lost by the treaty of Tilsit, but gained so much more as to give her an overwhelming weight in the chimerical scheme of the balance of power in Europe.

THE REACTION IN ROME

With the success of the long nursed plot for the restoration of Louis XVIII., the monarchical reaction swept over Europe like a flood. All the old tyrannies, clerical and aristocratic, came back in triumph, and the progress of reform was checked.

Before the end of 1813 Napoleon, at the Duc de Bassano's advice, had admitted the necessity of restoring

¹ Parl. Deb., XXX., 290.

² *ib.*, XXX., 289, 90, March 20th, 1815.

³ *ib.*, XXX., 648.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 1814, II., 457.

Pope Pius VII. to Rome, and Ferdinand VII. to Madrid. The Pope at least would keep the Austrians out of Rome and on January 23rd, 1814, he left Fontainebleau for that city. He returned as "God's Vicar on Earth," and quickly resumed his temporal power. On May 15th the abolition of the Code Napoléon was proclaimed; and in August the Order of the Jesuits, suppressed in 1773 by Clement XIV., was re-established with all its old privileges. Other religious orders were revived; all meetings of secret societies, especially of the Freemasons, were religiously forbidden, and every encouragement was given to informers. Such was the measure of liberty the Allies had brought to the Papal States.

THE REACTION IN SPAIN

But it was worse in Spain, blessed by the return of Ferdinand VII., who on January 6th, 1814, reached Madrid. He soon declared his royal intention not to swear to the Constitution that had been settled by the Cortes in 1810; he would suffer no such restraints on his unlimited sovereignty, nor did his dissolution of the Cortes meet with the least resistance. "Perish the Constitution" was the cry of the country, and wholesale arrests of liberal speakers or writers afforded the happiest auguries for the returning despotism. The clerical world rejoiced in the restored convents, and still more in the resumption on July 21 by the Holy Office of the Inquisition of its abolished jurisdiction over men's souls and bodies. It is a fact in history one would gladly forget that the maintenance of the Inquisition was the advice which the Duke of Wellington had pressed on the Spaniards as of primary importance, to prevent the clerical party from joining the French¹; but not even the plea of military necessity can justify before posterity the sympathy shown by the Duke and his brother Lord Wellesley² with an institution of greater cruelty than

¹ Napier, V., 15.

² *ib.*, V., 18.

any other ever designed by the brain of men. The Supreme Council and all other tribunals of the Inquisition were again set in motion as they existed before 1808, and in short by the harmony set up between Church and State such a tyranny laid its grip on Spain as would have hardly discredited the dark ages. And this was what the Allies, and especially Castlereagh, called the liberation of Spain. Neither during nor after the war did Spain show us any appreciable gratitude for our interference, which, if it released her from the rule of the French, gave her back to the oppressions of the priests.

THE END OF THE AMERICAN WAR

It was to be deplored that, the war with France having ended, the war with America, which had sprung out of it, was suffered to continue. To each country the justice of the war seemed to be its own exclusive property. To our claim, based on the ground that our enemy had declared it, the answer was that war had existed in fact, though not in name, long before its declaration; and President Madison assured Congress on March 4, 1813, that the war was "stamped with that justice which invited the smiles of heaven on the means of conducting it to a successful issue."¹ On the other hand there was a large peace party in America which was blind to these "smiles of heaven," and which differed widely from their President to a degree that at one time threatened the Union.

But early in 1813 came an offer from our Russian ally to mediate between us, an offer which was peremptorily declined by us "on the ground that England was the best and only competent judge of her own rights," as Castlereagh said.² Lord Wellesley was amongst those who deprecated the refusal, and, though it was decided on both sides to try direct negotiations for peace, his view was that the contest was deliberately

¹ Ann. Reg., 1813, II., 394.

² Parl. Deb., XXX., 531.

prolonged from the hope that the release of our forces from Spain might enable us not to bring the war with America to a close "without some measure of revenge, without some punishment for her indiscretion."¹ So in June 9,000 men were sent from Bordeaux; three brigades of infantry sent to Canada and one as an expeditionary force against the coasts of America, to retaliate for outrages committed by her on the frontiers.

These outrages had been committed in the course of 1813. In May the small town of York, the capital of Upper Canada, the House of Assembly, and the House of the Governor, had been burnt to the ground, "among other public and private buildings." On October 6th, the whole of the buildings of the Moravian missionaries had been burnt; and on December 10th and 13th the village of Newark, of 150 houses, had been reduced to ashes and their wretched inhabitants turned adrift in the middle of a Canadian winter.²

Reprisals for these barbarities were duly carried out at the end of December, 1813, when the town of Buffalo and the village of Blackrock were delivered over to a similar fate. "The town itself, and the whole of the public stores, containing considerable quantities of clothing, spirits and flour were then set on fire and totally consumed; as was also the village of Blackrock." So wrote General Riall with great satisfaction on January 1st, 1814, from Fort Erie.³

Whitbread argued fairly that no atrocity of the enemy justified our commission of similar crimes, unless we should be justified in scalping all the Indian prisoners we might capture; and that in any case Buffalo and Blackrock were a sufficient set-off for York and Newark. But far from it; for on August 3rd, 1814, Sir George Prevost, Governor-General of British North America, wrote to Sir Alexander Cochrane, our naval commander,

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 590, April 13th, 1815. ² Parl. Deb., XXIX., 58, 9.

³ Ann. Reg., II., 147.

inviting him to co-operate with himself in measures of retaliation for the outrages of the previous year.¹ Goulburn, who stated this fact, and who somewhat ardently defended the Ministerial policy of vindictive punishment, was actually at the time one of the Peace Commissioners with the Americans at Ghent, though nothing could be conceived better calculated to prevent peace than this campaign of reprisals. Its worst illustration was the raid on Washington under the command of General Ross, whose force reached the capital at 8 p.m. on the night of August 24th. The General thus described what followed: "Judging it of consequence to complete the destruction of the public buildings with the least possible delay, so that the army might retire without loss of time, the following buildings were set on fire and consumed: The Capitol, including the Senate-house and House of Representation, the Arsenal, the Dock-yard, Treasury, War Office, the President's Palace, Rope-walk, and the great bridge across the Potomac." The object of the expedition having been thus accomplished within twenty-four hours, General Ross withdrew his force of 1,500 men on the following night.² Admiral Cockburn's version of the affair was as follows: "It was dark before we reached the city; and on the general, myself, and some officers advancing a short way past the first houses of the town, without being accompanied by the troops, the enemy opened upon us a heavy fire of musketry from the capitol and other houses: these were therefore almost immediately stormed by our people, taken possession of, and set on fire, after which the town submitted without further resistance."³ This destruction of non-military buildings was strongly denounced in the British Parliament, especially by Sir James Mackintosh on April 11, 1815.⁴ But the Ministerial defence wavered between Lord

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIX., 60. November 8th 1814.

² Ann. Reg., II., 219. ³ *ib.*, II., 228, August 27th, 1814.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XXX., 526, 7.

Liverpool's plea, that it was in retaliation for the burning by the Americans of public buildings in York,¹ and Lord Bathurst's plea, that it was in consequence of General Ross' horse having been killed by a shot aimed from a private house at its rider.² It would have been better to stand on one plea or the other, instead of upon both. The General strove to save the lives and properties of the inhabitants of the offending houses, though forfeited by the customs of war; but much burning continued the next day, and President Madison in a proclamation of September 1st not unjustly denounced the wanton destruction as opposed to the principles of civilised warfare.³

A few days later General Ross lost his life (September 12th) in an unsuccessful expedition against Baltimore, of which the chief military effect was the removal by the citizens "of the whole of their property to places of more security inland."⁴ They owed it to the vigour of their defence that the dreaded fate of Washington was not also their own.

All through the year the war increased in mutual ferocity and continued indecisiveness. We extended our blockade from the ports south of New York to those north of it to our boundary in New Brunswick, and on June 29th President Madison protested by proclamation against the illegality of a paper blockade of 2,000 miles of coast-line. We took and burnt Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario in May, and on July 3rd the Americans took Fort Erie; our failure to recapture it on August 12th costing us 962 casualties. Respect for the immunity of private property was more loudly professed than practised; as when the town of Alexandria, capitulating to Captain Gordon on August 29th, had to deliver not only its ships and stores, but "merchandise of every description," as an alternative to the destruction of

¹ Parl. Deb., XXIX., 24.

³ Ann. Reg., II., 49.

² *ib.*, XXX., 606.

⁴ Ann. Reg., 232.

the town.¹ Sir George Prevost's failure against Plattsburg on Lake Champlain in September was most disastrous, though a large number of Peninsular veterans stiffened his forces of 14,000 or 15,000 men.² But the final episode of this wretched war was the worst of all: the expedition against New Orleans, the great cotton emporium of the Southern States, denounced in Parliament as undertaken for plunder and nothing else.³ The operations lingered into the New year, and ended with the death of the brave Sir Edward Pakenham, at the head of his troops, and by a slaughter of which the extent can be measured by the admission of over 2,000 casualties. But by that time peace had been signed at Ghent on December 24th, 1814.

Seldom had a peace been more difficult to make, nor one in some respects less satisfactory when made. For it actually left unsettled the main points which had been the object of the war. The American Government, on opening negotiations on January 28th, 1814, had insisted mainly on a precise and just definition of blockade and on the cessation of "the degrading practice" of our claim to search American vessels for British deserters. "Our flag must protect the crew, or the United States cannot consider themselves an independent nation."⁴ There were other questions concerning the pacification of the Indian tribes involved in the war and about boundaries, but it was on our maritime rights that the chief difficulties hinged. Lord Bathurst said in regard to the impressment of seamen that we neither possessed nor claimed rights which we were not ready to grant to other nations,⁵ and so said Lord Liverpool,⁶ but, whatever the precedents of so galling a right, its advantage to us was at no time worth the continuance of the war; nor was a defence of it true which implied that, if at peace ourselves, we should have dreamt of suffering

¹ Ann. Reg., 1814, 186. ² *ib.*, 190. ³ Parl. Deb., XXX., 522.

⁴ Parl. Deb., XXIX., 369. ⁵ *ib.*, XXX., 604. ⁶ *ib.*, XXX., 649.

such powers as Denmark or the United States, if belligerents, to search our vessels for possible deserters. The 25th of June was the first day on which the Conference began at Ghent, but it was not till August 7th that the American commissioners received instructions not to press the impressment question, "and then the negotiation proceeded."¹ Only by shelving the questions of our maritime claims was peace possible, and the final treaty contained not a word about the original causes of the war. They were left to the next war to decide, and the fact greatly deducts from Alison's verdict that the terms of peace were "highly honourable to Great Britain." With the exception of certain islands in Passamaquoddy Bay, to be settled by subsequent arbitration, each side restored its respective conquests, and boundary disputes were left over for future settlement or dispute. A treaty so indecisive² as to leave to posterity to bear the brunt of the failure of contemporary diplomacy was a poor result of the years of bitter warfare. We had captured during the war 1,900 of the enemy's merchant vessels, and brought 20,000 of their seamen into British prisons³; on the other hand shoals of American privateers, despite the blockade, had captured thousands of our ships of commerce.⁴ If to these evils be added the immense loss of life, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the diplomacy of Lord Castlereagh and Lord Liverpool, which was responsible for the protraction of the war, fully deserved the severe condemnation it received from Lord Wellesley and Lord Grenville. It was a war as destitute of glory in its conduct as of profit from its conclusion.

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 650. ² *ib.*, XXX., 210-7. ³ *ib.*, XXIX., 12. ⁴ *ib.*, XXIX., 45

CHAPTER XIV

Pacification ?

WHILST reaction under the guise of restoration was thus in full swing over Europe, the Congress of Vienna in the autumn of 1814 found it no easy task to bring into harmony the principles of settlement agreed upon between the Powers at Paris at the end of May. Their rival cupidities had still as keen an edge. Even the preliminary discussions nearly wrecked the Congress before it began ; for whilst Nesselrode wanted the whole of the Duchy of Warsaw for Russia, Hardenberg wished for some of it for Prussia.¹ Austria of course desired all she could get of Italy ; but it was the rivalries between Russia for Poland and of Prussia for Saxony which chiefly endangered the new-born pacification of Europe. There were times when the Czar attacked Metternich and Hardenberg " with bitter fury," even in the presence of the Austrian Emperor and the Prussian King, and when he indulged in " ungovernable displays of temper " towards them and Talleyrand, though always courteous to Castlereagh.² But even Lord Castlereagh had begun to be almost as afraid of the menacing power of Russia as he had lately been of Napoleon's. He steadily refused, on February 9th, 1816, to answer Brougham's inquiry as to the nature of the secret treaty made in January, 1815, between England, Austria and France ; by which each of these three Powers agreed to bring, if necessary, 150,000 men into the field for their common defence against their recent Russian and Prussian allies.³ Thus the new balance of Power, so boasted of as the result and justification of the late war, was already tottering, and all the feastings and dancings of that gay winter in Vienna could hardly keep the smouldering fires of diplomacy from bursting into fresh flame.

¹ Sorel, *L'Europe*, VIII., 379. ² Webster's Congress of Vienna, 103, 4.

³ Czartoryski's Memoirs, II., 285.

The consternation produced therefore in the Congress by the news of Napoleon's landing in France on March 1st, 1815, amounted almost to a panic; as shown by the declaration of March 13th that Napoleon "had placed himself without the pale of civil and social relations, and that as an enemy and disturber of the tranquillity of the world he had rendered himself liable to public vengeance."

It was not easy to interpret this language as other than a direct incitement to assassination, as it was interpreted both by Whitbread and by Lord Grey,¹ and it needed a direct disclaimer of this meaning by Lord Liverpool on April 27th to satisfy the public mind to the contrary. The words, he said, only meant, "hostility against the parties such as that maintained by one belligerent against another,"² or as Wellesley Pole put it "that Bonaparte had forfeited all his political rights,"³ but it might have seemed to lie within the power of diplomacy to use language that was not open to the interpretation that, as Lord Grey put it, "the secret dagger as well as the public sword should be unsheathed against Napoleon."⁴

This declaration, pledging the League to defend the Treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814, was followed up on March 25th by a new treaty, described by Lord Wellesley as "the most incomprehensible production ever submitted to the judgment of man."⁵ But, whatever else was obscure in it, this at least was clear, that it revived the stipulation of the treaty of Chaumont against Napoleon, and was thus virtually a determination on war. Yet, although this treaty, as *signed*, reached London on April 5th, the Liverpool Government two days later, when asking Parliament to vote for its support of the Prince Regent's message for an augmentation of the army and navy with a view to concerted action with the Allies, concealed the fact of its existence;

¹ Parl. Deb., XXX., 338, 888.

² *ib.*, XXX., 884.

³ *ib.*, XXX., 994. ⁴ *ib.*, XXXI., 344.

⁵ *ib.*, XXX., 880.

representing the vote as only a precautionary measure of defence and not as committing the country to war. Lord Castlereagh's language was most deceptive: "we should see whether the Continental nations thought their security would be better provided for by war or by precautionary preparations; we should not give them a fictitious wish for war, nor overstrain the argument in favour of it, etc."¹ Sir Francis Burdett, suspecting that more than preparation for war was meant, refused to vote for the Address, but others like Lord Grey, Lord Darnley, Sir John Newport and Ponsonby voted for the Address as only committing them to precautionary preparation; and when the *Times* of April 21st published a garbled edition of the concealed treaty,² which revealed the fact that it was actually signed when Castlereagh had represented that the question of peace or war was still an open one, their resentment was forcibly expressed. Lord Wellesley went so far as to charge the Government with an act of bad faith to Parliament,³ and, if the plea were valid, that it was unusual for treaties before ratification to be submitted to Parliament, the fact that it had been signed sufficed to stamp its concealment with something like sharp practice on the credulity of Parliament.⁴

The treaty of Fontainebleau of April 11th, 1814,⁵ having failed to confine Napoleon to the island of Elba, the Government incurred hardly less abuse than Napoleon himself for its share in the matter. The probability of his escape had long been a subject of common talk, and had been a topic in almost every newspaper for months.⁶ Castlereagh's defence was that the treaty had been better than a protracted war; it was "one of policy and not of generosity."⁷ With such elements of generosity as it contained Castlereagh indeed had had nothing to do. Arriving at Paris from

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 434. ² *ib.*, XXX., 771. ³ *ib.*, XXX., 877.

⁴ *ib.*, XXX., 961.

⁵ Parl. Deb., XXX., 382.

⁶ Parl. Deb., XXX., 746.

⁷ *ib.*, XXX., 424.

Vienna on April 10th, 1814, he found it virtually concluded. There were twenty-one articles in the treaty, and Castlereagh only acceded to those two of them which gave Napoleon the sovereignty and residence of Elba, and the Duchies of Parma, Placentia and Guastalla to Marie Louise and her male heirs. Castlereagh was opposed to Elba as too near to France and Italy, and he rejected Napoleon's repeated petition for an asylum in England;¹ but Alexander was insistent, and all Castlereagh could do was to limit Napoleon's possession of Elba to a life interest. It was at his instance too that the Imperial titles and rank of Napoleon and Marie Louise were restricted to their lives; and he kept himself clear of all the other stipulations of the treaty which provided liberal allowances for Napoleon and members of his family, as well as of the guarantee by which the other Powers bound themselves to the execution of the terms of the treaty.

Consequently, there was no obligatory treaty between England and Napoleon; and though Napoleon, by the first article of the treaty, had abdicated the French Throne, the breach of that article was one that might concern our Allies but had no reference to ourselves.

We had agreed that Napoleon should enjoy Elba as a residence, not as a prison; and if, as a sovereign, he chose to leave his residence, he was within his rights, so far as we were concerned.

If the treaty of Fontainebleau erred on the side of generosity or of laxity of provision, the defence of it seemed sound, that it was the best of which the circumstances admitted. For there had been no unconditional surrender. Napoleon still had an army of 30,000; Soult in the south of France had 50,000; the Viceroy of Italy had also a large force, and the attitude of the garrisons in France, Holland and on the Rhine was still uncertain. Moreover, to secure the defection

¹ *ib.*, XXX., 378.

of Marshal Marmont and others it had been necessary to guarantee the life and safety of Napoleon, and his removal from France. It was Alexander's proposal that "the destroyer of the human race" should be allowed to choose his own residence, and he had chosen Elba, possibly for the reason that ultimately revealed itself.¹

But the landing at Golfe Juan on March 1st, 1815, had the merit of dispelling the discord of the Allies. It threw them together again, and turned against their old enemy the swords they were on the point of turning against one another. For some time the Powers had been uneasy about him, and but for Alexander's sense of honour would have removed him to a safer distance; it may be doubted whether Napoleon's breach of the Fontainebleau treaty did more than anticipate their own. If Napoleon justified his return on the broad ground of an appeal to the French nation to choose between himself and Louis XVIII., he also had charges of disregard of the treaty as against himself. His pension had not been paid by Louis XVIII., and the poor argument, that as an annual payment it was not due till the end of the complete year, did not prevent Castlereagh on his return through Paris from justly insisting on the necessity of its payment.² In his proclamation of March 8th, 1815, Napoleon complained of the agreement not having been kept which promised the Duchies of Parma, Placentia and Guastalla to his wife and son.³

But technically he had broken the treaty with the three monarchs in whose guarantee we had not joined. "The British Government," said Castlereagh, "had not even gone to the extent of guaranteeing the stipulations in the treaty of Fontainebleau respecting the territorial arrangements"; that treaty had ceased to exist after

¹ Ann. Reg., 1814, 24,

² Parl. Deb., XXX., 726.

³ *ib.*, XXX., 568, XXXI., 340.

the withdrawal from Elba.¹ The treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814, was one between the Allies, including England, and Louis XVIII.; and as Napoleon was no party to it, he could not be said to violate it; he simply disregarded it. But, as that treaty granted to France easier terms because it was made with Louis and not with Napoleon, the Allies were free to claim that the new situation resulting from the glorious adventure which drove Louis from Paris, without a blow struck in his defence, renewed the state of belligerency which had preceded the treaty. And thus the war was alive again.

But not before Napoleon had made an effort to prevent it. On April 4th Caulaincourt sent Castlereagh a peace overture: France had not received for her sacrifices the price of her devotion to Louis, and had therefore "by a universal and spontaneous impulse" declared as her deliverer the only man from whom she could expect the guarantee of her liberties and independence; the Bourbon family had left France without a drop of blood having been shed in its defence; the restoration of the Emperor was the most brilliant of his triumphs, but he had no other wish than to repay the affections of the French people, not by the trophies of vain ambition, but by all the benefits of an honourable repose; his disposition to respect the rights of other nations inspired the hope that those of France would also be respected; and if other Sovereigns would, like himself, place their honour in the maintenance of peace, the tranquillity of the world would be assured.² A second letter of the same date addressed the same sentiments directly to the Prince Regent. And similar letters were sent, one from Napoleon to the Emperor Francis, and one from Caulaincourt to Metternich, both expressive of a desire for peace and of a promise to observe the Treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814.

¹ Parl. Deb., XXX., 725, April 20th, 1815.

² Parl. Deb., XXXI., 309.

Castlereagh replied to Caulaincourt on April 8th in his stiffest style: "I am to acquaint your Excellency that the Prince Regent has declined receiving the letter addressed to him; and has at the same time given me his orders to transmit the letters, addressed by your Excellency to me, to Vienna, for the information and consideration of the Allied Sovereigns and plenipotentiaries there assembled." There should be no peace with Napoleon if Castlereagh could prevent it. And when all these letters came before the Congress at Vienna on May 3rd, it was decided to take no notice of the French offer.¹ They took the view expressed by Lord Bathurst in the Lords on May 23rd that the peace offer was "one of the most insulting papers ever known in the annals of diplomacy."²

But the letters of April 4th bore no such insult on their surface; they read as *bona fide* overtures of peace dictated by the obvious motives that the changed military situation required. The Treaty of Paris had completely shorn Napoleon, had he preferred a policy of aggression, of the German and Italian allies which had been the great props of his power. And the French army had been reduced to a peace establishment. It was easy to make a case for the justice of renewing the war; the mere asseveration of a war's justice has at all times sufficed for a proof of it; but, as Sir James Mackintosh said, justice was sometimes "the smallest part of the morality of a war," and its policy was the greatest part of its morality.³ Viewed from the light of the subsequent history of Europe, the wisdom of Lord Castlereagh's action in peremptorily snubbing Napoleon's peace offer, and in preferring war to negotiation, is not so clear to posterity as it was to his contemporaries. That Whitbread's motion of April 28th against a renewal of the war was defeated by 273 votes to 72 left this question quite undecided.

¹ Parl. Deb., XXXI., 311.

² *ib.*, XXXI., 367.

³ Parl. Deb., XXX., 739.

Castlereagh based his philippic of April 28th, 1815, against Napoleon mainly on certain instructions in cipher sent by him to Caulaincourt at Chatillon on March 19th, 1814, the day the Conference closed. They had been signed by the Duc de Bassano and were ordered to be burnt when read. Caulaincourt was to accede to the Allies' terms, but to contrive to keep some points unsettled with a view to breaking the treaty if convenient, and designed to keep in his control Antwerp, the key of France; Mayence, the key of Germany; and Alexandria, the key of Italy.¹ To make a treaty with a premeditated design to break it Castlereagh denounced as passing the ordinary bounds of human wickedness. On May 22nd he quoted this letter to the House; vouched for its derivation from the "most authentic official sources"; and expressed contempt for the enemy's denial of its genuineness. It ran: "The Emperor desires that you should make no positive engagement upon everything which may relate to delivering up the fortresses of Antwerp, Mayence and Alexandria, if you should be obliged to consent to their cession; his intention being, *even though he should have ratified the treaty*, to be guided by the military situation of affairs: wait till the last moment. The bad faith of the Allies in respect to the capitulations of Dresden, Dantzic and Gorcum, authorises us to be on our guard. Refer therefore these questions to a military arrangement, as was done at Presburg, Vienna and Tilsit. The Emperor desires that you should never lose sight of his intention not to deliver up those three keys of France, if military events, on which he wishes always to rely, should permit him not to do so, even if he should have signed the cession of all these provinces. In a word his Majesty wishes to be able after the treaty to take advantage of existing circumstances to the last moment. He advises you to burn this letter as soon as you have read it."²

¹ Parl. Deb., XXX., 978, 9. ² *ib.*, XXXI., 405. Schoell's Recueil, V., 121.

This letter, dated March 19th, with other documents relating to it, Castlereagh declared to be "genuine beyond the reach of controversy."¹ Nevertheless its authenticity has been much disputed. Fournier contends for its genuineness¹ against Houssaye² who thought it spurious. Ernouf quotes against it the Duc de Bassano's explanations in numbers 134 and 145 of the *Moniteur* of 1815; the compromising phrases in italics were alleged to have been inserted in the despatch as dictated by Napoleon; and the Duc de Bassano disclaimed it most strongly.³ As it had the effect of diverting Metternich from his endeavours, even after the close of the Chatillon negotiations, to make peace with Napoleon, the motive for the alleged falsification was not wanting; but at the same time the plea of forgery affords a facile defence against incriminating documents.

It was the same with three out of the six letters quoted by Castlereagh on May 2nd, 1815, to justify our release from our engagement with Murat, King of Naples. All six letters had come in answer to a request from Castlereagh to Talleyrand to search the public offices of Paris for documents bearing on the conduct of Murat. How two of these letters, written by Napoleon to Murat at Naples, should have come to be found at Paris was never asked. But they served Talleyrand's purpose of releasing England from her engagement with Murat, a purpose previously revealed by him in his famous letter to Castlereagh of December 15th, 1814, wherein he advocated the recognition by the Vienna Congress of Ferdinand IV. King of Sicily, as the legitimate king of Naples; although at the time Austria had guaranteed the kingdom of Naples to Murat, and England had given her assent. It was of this Talleyrand letter that Lord Grey used some strong language: "in the worst transaction of the worst period of the

¹ 232.² 1814, 287.³ Ernouf, 655.

worst government that ever existed—in the vilest deceit, the most infamous perfidy, the foulest crime that ever occurred—in the blackest record of fraud and imposture that is to be met with in the annals of the world, nothing can be more flagrant and heinous, nothing more hateful for its treachery, nothing more contemptible for its baseness.”¹ If this language was fairly applicable to Talleyrand’s letter (nor did Castlereagh urge a word in defence of it,²) documents purporting to have been found by Talleyrand at Paris and tending to produce on Castlereagh the desired effect were of very suspicious authority. Even Castlereagh thought one of them curious. And well he might; for chance led to the discovery of the draft copies of the originals sent to Castlereagh from the Comte de Blacas,³ in the handwriting of an abbé F——, who had changed the dates of letters written in 1812 to 1814 and so falsified certain expressions as to make the letters applicable to the later date.⁴ It was presumably these falsified or forged letters, sent by the unsuspecting Castlereagh on March 12th to the Duke of Wellington at Vienna, which, supplementing the rumours about Murat’s treachery, convinced the Powers there assembled “of the absolute necessity of attacking him forthwith”: which accordingly was done by the Austrian declaration of war against Naples on April 12th. It was said that on hearing of Napoleon’s landing Murat played a double part: assuring the Austrian ambassador of his determined fidelity to the Allies, and at the same time sending his aide-de-camp, the Count of Beaufromont, to France to assure Napoleon of his support.⁶ And the consequent breach made it easy, as Talleyrand wished, to restore Naples to the Bourbon Ferdinand IV.; though it remains doubtful whether the breach would have

¹ Parl. Deb., XXXI., 17. ² *ib.*, XXXI., 44. ³ *ib.*, XXXI., 146-53.

⁴ Ernout, 653.

⁵ *ib.*, XXXI., 131. Wellington to Castlereagh, March 25th.

⁶ *ib.*, XXXI., 145.

occurred but for the conviction of Murat's treachery to the Allies produced by the timely discovery of those suspicious letters at Paris. The Duke of Wellington did not share in this conviction.

Hostilities did not begin immediately; not before May 22nd, when, in answer to Lord Grey's question whether the country was at war or not, Lord Liverpool replied that the Prince Regent's Message of that day, calling on Parliament to support measures taken with the Allies to defend the violated treaties and to avert the revival of the Napoleonic system,¹ was a war message. But even then there was no unanimity in either House for resuming the war. No mean minority favoured negotiations; in the Lords on May 23rd a minority of 44 to 156, in the Commons on May 25th a minority of 92 to 331; and that within a month of Waterloo. Noteworthy amongst the minority was Lord Wellesley who, differing in this from his ducal brother, rather than renew the war would have tried the experiment of recognising Napoleon as a constitutional king of France. It might have been the wiser policy; but the great and decisive victory of Waterloo on June 18th, followed within a fortnight on July 3rd by the second capitulation of Paris, put the pacifist minority out of court altogether. Still, as Waterloo could not be foreseen as a certainty, it was not unreasonable to vote against a fresh war, which was as likely to last for years as for weeks; and Lord Castlereagh's invective against Napoleon's moral character was quite irrelevant to the question whether, if the French nation preferred Napoleon to the "old and gouty" Louis, as Lord Milton described him,² they should not have him. For in spite of all denials the real object of the war was, as Ponsonby said, to dethrone Napoleon and replace the Bourbon, and in Grey's belief the Bourbon family was "absolutely repulsive to all France."³ The restoration of Louis gave no certain

¹ Parl. Deb. XXXI., 295. ² Parl. Deb., XXXII., 708. ³ *ib.*, XXXI., 357.

security for peace, and in the altered relations between France and the rest of Europe that had been set up by the Treaty of Paris of May 30th, 1814, Grey's argument, that securities might be obtained from Napoleon which would amply guarantee the continued peace of Europe was probably sound. It can never be proved that this would not have been the wiser course, and the later history of Europe suggests that it would have been.

Nor need it have interfered with that re-settlement of Europe by which the General Treaty of Vienna of June 9th, 1815, formulated the Allied war aims of the preceding year. This was the longest treaty till then recorded in history,¹ but its effect admits of short summarisation.

The three great monarchies of Europe achieved all or most of their real objects in the war. The liberation of Europe meant in practice the subjection of large populations to these monarchies. Thus the Duchy of Warsaw, with the exception of portions reserved to Prussia and Austria, was taken from Saxony and transferred to the will of the Czar under the title of the King of Poland.

More than half of Saxony also fell to the share of Prussia, which with Castlereagh's aid thus took its place finally among the great Powers of Europe.

Austria's share of the conquests was on a level with those of her neighbours. Whatever she had been forced to give up in 1797, 1801, 1805, 1807 and 1809 she recovered; thus becoming again the mistress of the Adriatic and of Northern Italy.

All these three Powers guaranteed the perpetual neutrality of Cracow as a free city with democratic institutions: a guarantee which went for the value of the parchment it was written on when in 1848 it suited Austria to annex it to her empire.

England was confirmed in her possession of Hanover, on which, since October 12th, 1814, the consenting

¹ Parl. Deb., XXXII., 71-113.

Powers had granted the dignity of a Kingdom. The Prince Regent of Great Britain and Hanover ceased to be a mere Elector of the Holy Roman Empire, and became King of Hanover. He exchanged certain portions of Hanover for portions of Prussia, including Hildesheim, and each Power agreed to the making of three military roads through their respective dominions to facilitate their future wars with their neighbours.

One great feature of the treaty was that several Serene Highnesses were transformed from Dukes into Grand Dukes, and lands with their thousands of souls on them were transferred from one Government to another with no more regard to the wishes of those souls than would have been paid to the souls of rabbits. Thus the Grand Duke of Hesse gained control of 140,000 souls from Prussia in return for the cession to Prussia of the Duchy of Westphalia, lately governed (and probably as well) by Jerome Bonaparte. There was no affectation in those days for the self-determination of peoples.

Not without much difficulty was the peace settled on lines of moderation. The usual debate between the party of revenge and the party of reconciliation was long and keen. On the one hand it was contended that only by crushing France almost out of existence by dismemberment could France be prevented from again disturbing the world's peace; on this side were Prussia, the Prince Regent, and the British public generally. On the other side it was argued that only a peace of generosity could be relied on as durable by the removal of a wish for revenge on the part of France; and on this side were the Czar, and Castlereagh and Wellington. Either side could appeal to reason as guided by the nature of things or by past history. Finally the party of moderation prevailed. Castlereagh began to fear lest Prussian militarism might prove as bad as the militarism of France: "there is a temper in the Prussian army," he wrote, "little less

alarming to the peace of Europe . . . than what prevails in the army of France."

Still France had to be "punished" for her renewed resistance to the Allies, though with all possible tenderness for the restored Louis. "Gros Papa," as the French called him, was to be propped up on his throne by 150,000 foreign soldiers occupying France for five years, and paid for by French money. So the Treaty of November 15th, 1815, whilst renewing the Treaty of Paris, carried its principles further. The boundaries of France were no longer to be those of 1792, as in the first treaty, but the more restricted boundaries of 1790. Both Prussia and Austria gained slices of her territory, and, whilst what had been allowed her of Savoy was transferred to the King of Sardinia, what had been left to her in Belgium was given to the King of the Netherlands. Lord Grenville condemned the new treaty because the dismemberment of France stopped short of crippling her for all future time, but between that view and the view of those who would have left the treaty of Paris untouched the Government preferred the middle course, Lord Liverpool's wise defence being that by too great a dismemberment "a feeling of hatred would have been excited, never to be conquered."¹ It was strangely assumed that, though dismemberment on a large scale, and such as Prussia pressed for, would be too humiliating to be borne, France would take no offence at having to pay an indemnity of 35 million pounds, and to pay 7½ millions for the maintenance of the army of occupation as a constant reminder of her defeat, to say nothing of 12 millions more of private claims. But what a bagatelle compared with the scale of indemnities a century later!

But it was for security rather than for punishment that this fine was levied on France. The war in its long course had changed its purpose. Beginning as a contest for Malta it had become a war for the suppression of French

¹ Parl. Deb., XXXII., 647, February 19th, 1816.

militarism. Castlereagh saw the danger of the spread of that infection into other lands than France. A military despotism, "interweaving itself by degrees into all the States of Europe," was the danger he had the sagacity to foresee, and he justified the fine imposed on France by the tendency of the loss of her pecuniary resources to diminish the military spirit which those resources had helped to sustain.¹ And as the dissolution and extinction of the French army was "the main object" of the Allied policy, Louis was told that, unless he dissolved the French army, the Allies would do so for him.² Castlereagh agreed with his pacifist opponents in this, that the world's peace could only be secured by the abatement of the military spirit which had overspread Europe, and by armies becoming again "universally the creatures of the State, instead of States being, as seen in some instances, the creatures of the armies."³ But, if the treaty of Vienna is to be judged by its success in diminishing European militarism, it must stand out as the greatest failure in the history of diplomacy. For militarism since then has advanced hand over hand, till mankind seems destined to lose all that ever made life worth living on this earth. The swollen empires of the world, so far from being a defence to the lives and properties of their citizens, now expose both to greater danger and loss than they incurred under the anarchies of the feudal system. And so it seems likely to remain whilst the world divides itself into antagonistic groups on the assumption that the welfare of one nationality cannot subsist with the welfare of another.

The French failed to show us the gratitude expected of them for giving them back to their Bourbon King. We had made enormous sacrifices for French Legitimacy, for the old principles of passive obedience and the divine right of kings. Yet they failed to elicit any French love for

¹ Parl. Deb., XXXII., 698.

² *ib.*, XXXII., 690, 1.

³ *ib.*, XXXII., 702.

us as a nation. For in December, 1815, Sir James Riddell could write from Paris to Sir George Jackson, that it was "terribly painful to know how vain had been all our sacrifices, and those who should feel the greatest obligations act towards us with the blackest ingratitude. . . . The English are as much detested here as if they had been the cause of all the ills of Europe, and the Duke of Wellington as if he had laid waste their towns and encouraged his troops to commit any species of vexation and pillage."¹

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," was long ago the Preacher's summing-up of all things human; that *the* vanity of vanities is war might have been his further and more particular generalisation had he lived in our later ages. Especially was such vanity predicable of the war that ended in 1815 with the overthrow of Napoleon. Or can it be said that the war was redeemed from vanity by the correspondence of its results with its original aims? The primary and most constant of those aims was the restoration of monarchy and the repression of republicanism; the statesmen of that time being as much concerned to make the world safe for monarchy as a century later they were to make it safe for democracy. The object was achieved; but was the restoration of Louis XVIII. to France, of Ferdinand VII. to Spain, or of the Prince of Orange to Holland, worth the bloodshed the task had involved? Were the countries concerned so much the happier for their enforced re-subjection to such men as in any way to compensate for the sufferings of the war? To answer this in the affirmative would need much sophistry. Or did the eventual peace justify the protraction of the war beyond the frequent opportunities of stopping it sooner? The peace, when it came, could claim no greater degree of durability than might have attached to any peace made in response to Napoleon's almost annual overtures for a negotiation. The renewal

¹ Jackson's Diaries, II., 513.

of war was only just averted in 1830, and though the peace of 1815 lasted till the Crimean war in 1854, it lacked all the elements of an assured stability.

And from the exclusively English point of view, what was the resultant gain? The commerce of the world, it has been answered.¹ But our commerce had been on the up-grade ever since the end of the American war; our exports having nearly doubled during the decade of peace between 1782 and 1792; nor is there any reason to think that our commerce would not have continued to increase at the same rate had there been no war at all. Even on the doubtful assumption that a monopoly of the world's commerce benefits a nation more than its distribution between several nations, the great superiority of our mercantile marine was bound to insure us the lion's share in the commerce of the world as time went on, had peace instead of war prevailed for the best part of two decades. Nor, if it could be proved that the war had increased the volume of our trade, would it follow that such a result repaid for all the evils of the long years of war? Only the most materialistic view of history could for a moment support such a conclusion. At the best it could only count as some mitigation of the appalling mass of misery caused by the war. The outstanding result of the war remains its futility and its vanity.

One solid fact, however, remained: Napoleon had passed from the world's stage, and the world hoped for and enjoyed some repose from war. In the attempt above made to hold the scales evenly between Napoleon and his Allied enemies it has been difficult to do justice to Napoleon without risking the charge of doing less than justice to our own part in his overthrow. The endeavour has been not to tilt the scales too much in his favour; but with the study of the war has come the conviction that large deductions must be made from the conventional doctrine, that Napoleon was a mere monster of militarism and that

¹ Kipling and Fletcher's *History*, 218.

to him alone must be attributed the sufferings that Europe experienced whilst he was in power. That he found delight in the glamour and glory and the triumphs of war is admitted by Bourrienne ; but he neither loved nor waged war for its own sake, as an end in itself. He was too ready to deem it the only road to peace : a point of view from which every militarist may claim, and always does claim, to be at heart a pacifist. It was from his side alone that overtures and advances were made for terminating the contest, and it is easier to assert than to prove that such overtures were justly repulsed as insincere and deceptive. The assumption that the Empire, if left undisturbed after the return from Elba, meant the renewal of war in Europe remains an assumption, besides running counter to probability in the changed circumstances of France and her enemies. But contemporaries could hardly have been expected to accept this chance with complacency, and the relief felt at the time by the final overthrow of a ruler whose career had coincided with a period of incessant political restlessness cannot fail to be justly felt still by the descendants of those to whom the name of Napoleon was a constant terror. Nevertheless the lapse of time enables a more charitable estimate to be formed of our great enemy's character and career than was possible a hundred years ago, and the greater friendship that recent comradeship in a common peril has since cemented between his nation and our own dispenses an English writer of the present day from that mere indulgence in uncritical abuse which was the tribute exacted of truth by patriotic exaggeration in days when danger from France loomed as large before men's eyes as a century later it did from Germany. If the judgment here presented, and based on a rigid adherence to the best contemporary evidence ; a judgment which, instead of throwing the whole responsibility for so prolonged a war on a single man or a single nation, makes it divisible in varying degrees between all the belligerents, should

contribute ever so slightly to confirm that closer fraternity between two nations which comes of a better mutual understanding of their past differences, a pacifist will not have striven wholly in vain to trace the steps by which what we now call Militarism—or the subordination of all other State ends to the main purpose of war—became established on the earth, till in its ever tightening grip human life is menaced with an ever increasing loss of value. For to what purpose fight in one century to make the world safe for Monarchy and in the next to make it safe for Democracy, if under either form of Government any liberty worthy of the name ceases to be a possession of humanity, and the thoughts, the conscience, the movements, and the activities of the individual are to fall under the grinding tyranny of a merciless militarist State, in itself standing for the mere majority of a mob? The drift in that direction was clearly given by the long wars with the French Republic and Empire, and in such a direction, by an apparent unalterable chain of causation, the drift seems bound to continue, unless or until by some hitherto indiscernible agency such an abatement of the military spirit in Europe as Castlereagh vainly hoped for saves our still unstable civilisation from a process of self-destruction or retrogression. But no one can assert the impossibility of such a change of thought among nations from militarism to pacifism as that which changed the code of personal honour when the judgments of law courts came to be substituted for the chances of duels; the ordeal of reason for the ordeal of battle. It is always legitimate to lean to the sunnier side of expectation, and to remember that on the side of hope there are no set limits to time.

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